

ARI Research Note 2009-17

**REVIEW OF INITIATIVES FOR INCREASING ENLISTED
REENLISTMENT IN THE U.S. ARMY**

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Kristen E. Horgen, Ulf C. Kubisiak, and Elizabeth Lentz**
Personnel Decisions Research Institutes



**Personnel Assessment Research Unit
Michael G. Rumsey, Chief**

November 2009

**United States Army Research Institute
for the Behavioral and Social Sciences**

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Executive Summary

Research Requirement:

As part of a research program entitled "Strategies to Enhance Retention" (code named "STAY"), the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI) is investigating career continuance decisions among first-term Soldiers. The STAY project aims to meet a variety of objectives, including the development, implementation, and evaluation of a few promising interventions that address first-term reenlistment. To guide the broader STAY research initiative, ARI's contractor, Personnel Decisions Research Institutes, Inc. (PDRI), reviewed past and ongoing interventions that support enlisted retention. Although this report primarily focuses on interventions directed toward the Active Component of the Army, initiatives targeting the Reserve Component and other military branches are discussed.

Procedure:

A variety of methods were utilized to gather information on retention-related initiatives. The authors began by conducting a literature search for journal articles, technical reports, briefings, and Army-related websites addressing interventions that support reenlistment. Additionally, interviews and focus groups with Army personnel were conducted to uncover unit-specific initiatives and potential gaps in the information obtained from the literature review. Subject matter experts were also contacted to supplement existing information. Finally, a limited literature search was conducted to acquire information on interventions implemented in other military branches.

Findings:

Results of the literature search, focus groups, and interviews are discussed in this report. To organize the findings, a taxonomy was created that differentiates between reenlistment incentives, work-related initiatives, non work-related initiatives, and group-level initiatives. Reenlistment incentives include reenlistment options, communication of reenlistment benefits, and other reenlistment incentives, while academic initiatives, career development and promotional opportunities, stabilization initiatives, and benefits are covered under work-related initiatives. Non work-related initiatives are broken down into recreational/ leisure activities, relocation services, deployment services, counseling/ support, financial services, spouse services, child services, and general information. Finally, awards and other group-level initiatives are described in the group-level initiatives section.

Research that has evaluated the effectiveness of existing interventions is reviewed as well. While the review uncovered a variety of interventions targeting retention, there is a dearth of empirical research evaluating their impact on reenlistment decisions. Further, most of the existing research is outdated, anecdotal, or examines criteria peripheral to retention, such as program use. There is also a concern that many Soldiers are not fully aware of the existing programs, or that they are not being implemented in the way they were intended. Implications are discussed in the context of the broader STAY project.

Utilization and Dissemination of Findings:

The findings uncovered in this research were used to help inform the development of the Enlisted STAY career continuance model and guide the selection of candidate career continuance interventions for development and testing. This report will serve as a useful resource for the planning, development, and evaluation of future retention interventions and policies.

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Introduction

As of 2009, the U.S. Army is facing considerable challenges as it transitions to meet the demands of the 21st century. The Army has been supporting a global war for over eight years and likely faces an "era of persistent conflict" (Geren & Casey, 2009) that will continue to require high deployment levels for some time. The OPTEMPO has and will continue to impact the Army in many ways, including Soldiers' experiences, career expectations, and propensity to reenlist. The Army is also undergoing a rapid transformation, resulting in changes to its doctrine, equipment, organization, and personnel. In the face of these challenges, the Army has recognized the importance of retaining adequate numbers of qualified personnel. One of the Army's four imperatives is to sustain the force, including a focus on retaining quality Soldiers in the Army (2009 Army Posture Statement).

In response to these concerns, the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI) initiated a three-year research program titled "STAY: Strategies to Enhance Retention." The goals of this effort are to develop and test a conceptual model of the career continuance process, and to identify, implement, and evaluate a few promising interventions that address Army attrition and reenlistment among first-term Soldiers. In support of these broad objectives, this report reviews past and ongoing interventions that support retention. A parallel effort that summarizes interventions addressing attrition has also been conducted (Kubisiak, Lentz, Connell, Tuttle, Horgen, Borman, Young, & Morath, 2005; Kubisiak, Lentz, Horgen, Bryant, Connell, Tuttle, Borman, Young, & Morath, 2009).

Our position is that reenlistment is an evolving decision process that occurs over time, rather than a one-time, isolated event. In our search for reenlistment initiatives, we chose to be inclusive rather than exclusive, incorporating a variety of Army programs aimed at enhancing the Soldier's quality of life in general, as opposed to focusing only on programs specifically targeting the reenlistment decision. This review is based on a number of sources, including a literature search, interviews and focus groups with Army personnel, and anecdotal reports from subject matter experts (SMEs). Although this report primarily focuses on interventions directed toward the Active Component of the Army, initiatives targeting the Reserve Component of the Army are discussed as well. In addition, retention interventions implemented in the U.S. Navy, Air Force, and Marines were examined for comparative purposes. We caution that the majority of the information was obtained from informal sources, such as websites and Soldier focus groups. Thus, for certain interventions, it was unclear whether the initiative was still offered in FY09, and whether it was unit- or post-specific initiative, or available Army-wide. Evaluation data were not available for the vast majority of interventions.

To organize the substantial number of initiatives identified in the review, we developed a system for classifying the interventions. This taxonomy is meant to provide an organizing framework, but we recognize that several of the interventions could be

placed in multiple categories. After classifying the initiatives according to the taxonomy, we summarized our findings and developed recommendations to assist ARI with the broader STAY research program.

This report is organized in five sections. Following the introduction is a section describing the specific procedure and approach that was used to identify interventions. Next, the reenlistment process is described to provide the context in which reenlistment decisions are made. The third section makes up the bulk of the report, summarizing the retention initiatives under the developed taxonomy, and presenting evaluative information where available. Finally, a summary of our findings and recommendations for future research are presented in the last section.

Procedure and Approach

We used a variety of methods to acquire information about reenlistment initiatives. We began our literature review by searching the Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC), PsycINFO, and Google Scholar, using search terms such as "Army retention" and "Army reenlistment." This method yielded many technical reports, journal articles, and professional publications related to reenlistment initiatives. However, because research in this domain is somewhat limited, we expanded our search to more informal sources of information. We relied heavily on internet websites, both Department of Defense (DoD) and non-DoD. Additionally, we examined installation-specific websites for all Army locations in search of both Army-wide initiatives and Post-specific programs. Although these websites provided an immense amount of information, the extent to which certain initiatives were implemented across installations and whether they were still in existence was often unclear.

We supplemented written materials with personal communications from knowledgeable sources. As part of the STAY project, interviews and focus groups were conducted at various Army installations in FY06 and FY07. A variety of Army personnel, including enlisted Soldiers, Reenlistment Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs), and Officers of varying ranks, provided information related to reenlistment initiatives. Further, we contacted other individuals identified as SMEs to provide anecdotal information about initiatives.

After gathering information about Army reenlistment initiatives, we conducted a more limited search on programs implemented in other military branches, including the U.S. Navy, Air Force, and Marines. This search was primarily done for comparative purposes, and internet websites provided the majority of information gathered.

During the compilation of the review, we categorized reenlistment initiatives into an organizational framework. These groupings include reenlistment incentives, work-related initiatives, non work-related initiatives, and group-level initiatives. Additional information on the framework, as well as a description of the specific programs, is provided later. First, however, a brief overview of the Army reenlistment process is provided in the next section.

Reenlistment Process

Army Career Counseling

The Army career counseling process is a continuous effort that begins the first day the Soldier enters the Army and spans the Soldier's entire career. In this effort, both Career Counselors and Reenlistment NCOs play a pivotal role, providing Soldiers with specific information regarding career advancement and reenlistment options upon contract completion.

Under the Army's current policy, the reenlistment eligibility window starts 24 months prior to a Soldier's Expiration Term of Service (ETS). At 24 months prior to ETS, the reenlistment window opens, and eligible Soldiers can submit applications to the BEAR (Bonus, Extension, and Retraining) Program for any Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) listed within the program. Between 24 and 18 months prior to ETS, an eligible Soldier may reenlist for Option 1, Regular Army (Needs of the Army). All other reenlistment options are available to eligible Soldiers between 18 months and three months prior to ETS. Alternative reenlistment options include Current Station Stabilization (Option 2), Army Training (Option 3), Overseas Assignment (Option 4), and Continental United States (CONUS) Station of Choice (Option 5). A more detailed discussion of each reenlistment option follows in the next section. The reenlistment eligibility window closes three months prior to ETS. However, at the time this report was prepared, this policy is currently suspended and eligible Soldiers are now allowed to reenlist for all reenlistment options for which they are qualified up to their ETS date. Additionally, deployed Soldiers can reenlist at any time, even if they are outside of their reenlistment window.

Career Counselors

Once Soldiers enter their unit of assignment, a Career Counselor talks to them about general career interests and goals. Additionally, Career Counselors are required to conduct reenlistment interviews periodically throughout the Soldier's term with all Soldiers holding the rank of Staff Sergeant (SSG, E-6) and below. Further, a Soldier has the opportunity to speak to a Career Counselor about reenlistment options at any time.

During the reenlistment interview, Career Counselors advise Soldiers on educational and professional development opportunities in the military and civilian world. Career Counselors also invite qualified Soldiers to reenlist. If the Soldier indicates a desire to leave the Army, he or she will be advised of Reserve Component opportunities. For those Soldiers not meeting expectations, Career Counselors suggest training programs so they can meet qualifications prior to

the expiration of their reenlistment window or offer alternative MOSs that are less competitive.

Reenlistment NCOs

Soldiers are identified by their Career Counselor as soon as they enter their reenlistment eligibility window (24 months prior to ETS). After being identified, Reenlistment NCOs contact Soldiers to discuss their reenlistment options. Reenlistment NCOs may operate at the Company and/ or Battalion level. They are not trained to counsel Soldiers, but are trained to coordinate and assist with the reenlistment process. Because the Career Counselors have exclusive access to the RETAIN system, a database that identifies open slots and Soldiers eligible for reenlistment, Reenlistment NCOs work closely with the Career Counselors in order to keep track of reenlistment numbers and available reenlistment options. Reenlistment NCOs also continuously provide Career Counselors with feedback regarding Soldiers' desired MOSs and/ or reenlistment options.

Table 1, copied from "Reenlistment Interviews" (n.d.), provides a detailed outline of the Army's Career Counseling process, including the various goals and topics discussed during each interview.

Table 1. The Army Career Counseling Process

	Timeline	Participants	Purpose	Topics Discussed
Phase 1: Integration	5 working days post assignment to unit	Career Counselor and Soldier	Integration	Welcoming to unit; basic human needs; finances; sponsorship; military programs; enlistment/reenlistment incentives
Phase 2A: Professional Development	30-60 days after assignment	Career Counselor and Soldier	Goal-setting	Follow-up integration phase; eligibility for continued service; promotion; educational/training opportunities; reclassification; reenlistment; benefits of honorable discharge
Phase 2B: Professional Development	90-120 days after assignment	Company Commander and Soldier	Job performance	Same as Phase 2A topics
Phase 2C: Professional Development	Annual follow- up BASD (basic active service date) anniversary	Career Counselor and Soldier	Developmental counseling	Same as Phase 2A topics

Table 1. The Army Career Counseling Process (continued)

	Timeline	Participants	Purpose	Topics Discussed
Phase 3A: Sustainment	15-16 months prior to ETS	Company Commander and Soldier	Commander's recommendation	Soldier's needs, wants, desires; eligibility for discharge; reenlistment; eligibility for waivers; Selective Reenlistment Bonus; Service Remaining Requirements
Phase 3B: Sustainment	13-14 months prior to ETS	Career Counselor and Soldier	Reenlistment counseling	Same as Phase 3A topics
Phase 3C: Sustainment	4 months prior to ETS	Career Counselor and Soldier	Reenlistment counseling	Same as Phase 3A topics
Phase 3D: Sustainment	90 days prior to ETS	Career Counselor and Soldier	Transition Counseling	Reserve components eligibility; Phase 3A topics
Phase 4: Career Development	Annual follow- up (BASD anniversary)	Career Counselor and Soldier	Developmental counseling	Eligibility for continued service; promotional and educational opportunities; retirement; retention control points; indefinite reenlistment program; voluntary separation

Reenlistment Initiatives

This section summarizes the reenlistment initiatives identified in our literature review and interviews with SMEs. For ease of interpretation, Army initiatives are divided into four overarching categories; however, these categories are not mutually exclusive, and a given intervention may fit into more than one classification. Our framework for categorizing reenlistment initiatives is provided in Table 2 and is described below.

The four categories of reenlistment initiatives include *Reenlistment Incentives*, *Work-Related Initiatives*, *Non Work-Related Initiatives*, and *Group-Level Initiatives*. The *Reenlistment Incentives* category focuses on incentives directly targeting the reenlistment decision and is divided into three dimensions: 1) Reenlistment Options; 2) Communication of Reenlistment Benefits; and 3) Other Reenlistment Incentives. The next two categories cover initiatives aimed at enhancing the quality of life of Soldiers and their families. More specifically, the *Work-Related Initiatives* category includes initiatives that target the Soldier's work life and is further classified into four dimensions: 1) Academic Initiatives; 2) Career Development and Promotional Opportunities; 3) Stabilization Initiatives; and 4) Benefits. *Non Work-Related Initiatives* are covered in the third category and consists of eight dimensions: 1) Recreational/ Leisure Activities; 2) Relocation Services; 3) Deployment Services; 4) Counseling/ Support; 5) Financial Services; 6) Spouse Services; 7) Child Services; and 8) General Information. Finally, the last category, *Group-Level Initiatives*, refers to reenlistment initiatives implemented at the group level as opposed to the individual level, and includes two dimensions: 1) Awards and 2) Other Group-Level Initiatives.

Table 2. Reenlistment Intervention Framework

Reenlistment Incentives
1. Reenlistment Options
2. Communication of Reenlistment Benefits
3. Other Reenlistment Incentives
Work-Related Initiatives
1. Academic Initiatives
2. Career Development and Promotional Opportunities
3. Stabilization Initiatives
4. Benefits

Table 2. Reenlistment Intervention Framework (continued)

Non Work-Related Initiatives	
1.	Recreational/Leisure Activities
2.	Relocation Services
3.	Deployment Services
4.	Counseling/Support
5.	Financial Services
6.	Spouse Services
7.	Child Services
8.	General Information
Group-Level Initiatives	
1.	Awards
2.	Other Group-Level Initiatives

Following a description of the Army reenlistment programs, we briefly discuss reenlistment initiatives that have been implemented in other branches of the U.S. military. Additionally, we provide a review of research evaluating the effectiveness of specific Army initiatives.

Reenlistment Incentives

The initiatives discussed in this section focus on the reenlistment decision itself, including reenlistment options, the communication of Army benefits, and other incentives designed to make reenlistment a desirable option.

Dimension 1: Reenlistment Options

The first dimension refers to the options available to first-term enlisted Soldiers who decide to reenlist in the Army. Currently, five main options exist for reenlistment, though the extent to which a given Soldier can utilize each one is dependent upon such factors as MOS, Army needs, and years of service. In addition to these five options, the Army offers programs and incentives to Soldiers who reenlist. These programs, as well as two formerly offered reenlistment options and one option that may be offered in the near future, are also included in this section. Unless otherwise noted, information from this section can be found at the following websites:

[http:// www.stayarmy.com/ OptElig.htm](http://www.stayarmy.com/OptElig.htm)

[http:// www.armyreenlistment.com/ options.htm](http://www.armyreenlistment.com/options.htm).

Option E-1: Regular Army

Soldiers who reenlist under this option are assigned to a station and MOS based on the needs of the Army. Thus, unlike the other reenlistment options, this option carries no guarantee of assignment, training, or stabilization. However, the minimum reenlistment term under the Regular Army option is two years, in

contrast to the three- or four-year minimum mandated by other options. Despite this advantage, Soldiers who reenlist for a two-year term are not eligible for selective reenlistment bonuses; this option carries no grade or service length requirements. Reenlistment NCOs generally only recommend this option to Soldiers who are not qualified for other incentives (Army Installation focus groups and interviews, personal communication, FY06 and FY07)

Option E-2: Current Station Stabilization

The Current Station Stabilization option offers a guaranteed 12-month stabilization period following reenlistment. This option is available to Soldiers of rank Staff Sergeant or below, and generally requires that Soldiers be at least six months away from their ETS. As an exception, Soldiers assigned to Korea or deployed/ deploying units are permitted to reenlist for this option for a 2-year term with a 6-month stabilization.

Option E-3: Army Training

The third reenlistment option, Army Training, provides Soldiers with guaranteed attendance at an available service school of choice. Specifically, Soldiers are permitted to attend training related to their Primary Military Occupational Specialty (PMOS), Additional Skill Identifiers (ASI), Special Qualification Identifiers (SQI), or language. With the exception of certain Career Management Fields (CMF) that are eligible to reenlist for three years, a minimum reenlistment period of four years is required. This option also carries rank and/ or General Technical (GT) score requirements.

Option E-4: Overseas Assignment

Soldiers who reenlist under this option are guaranteed an assignment to one of seven overseas options, including Korea, the Pacific area (short or long tour), Alaska, the Caribbean area, Europe, or Hawaii. The guaranteed assignment length is 24 months or 12 months from the date that dependents arrive in long tour areas, whichever occurs later. Additionally, Soldiers are required to reenlist for at least four years, and rank limitations are associated with this option.

Option E-5: CONUS Station of Choice

The final reenlistment option currently offered to enlisted Soldiers is CONUS Station of Choice. This option provides Soldiers with a guaranteed 12-month assignment at their preferred CONUS station, provided that a need exists for the Soldier's PMOS at that particular station. The minimum mandated reenlistment period is three years, and Soldiers must be of rank SSG or below to select this option.

Reenlistment Bonuses

In addition to the five formal reenlistment options mentioned above, Soldiers are often eligible to receive bonuses upon reenlistment. Selective Reenlistment Bonuses (SRBs) are offered to those serving in the Active Component, while the Selective Reenlistment Incentive Program (SRIP) targets Soldiers in the National Guard. Other types of reenlistment bonuses include the Deployed SRB and the Critical Skills Retention Bonus (CSRB; Congressional Budget Office, 2006).

The goal of SRBs is to increase reenlistment rates in MOSs that have inadequate retention levels ("SRB Program," n.d.). Thus, SRBs are only available to Soldiers who reenlist for certain MOSs, and a three-year minimum reenlistment term is required. While the amount of the bonus may vary, it is generally a product of the Soldier's monthly base pay, the number of years the Soldier extends his/ her service, and the award level assigned to the selected MOS, with a \$20,000 maximum. Another type of reenlistment bonus, CSRB, was introduced by the DoD with the intention of increasing retention of select skills identified as critical (Department of Health and Human Services, 2003). While SRBs and CSRBs target specific skills and occupations, the Army recently implemented the Deployed SRB, which is available to a broader group of Soldiers (Congressional Budget Office, 2006). Introduced in 2003, the Deployed SRB is designed to enhance reenlistment rates among active-duty Soldiers serving in Iraq, Afghanistan, or Kuwait. The Deployed SRB was recently extended to Soldiers in the National Guard and Army Reserve as well, offering Soldiers up to \$15,000 tax-free for reenlisting while deployed (Eidson, 2005). Further, Soldiers can reenlist for a Deployed SRB at any time while deployed, regardless of whether they are in their reenlistment window (Army Installation focus groups and interviews, personal communication, FY07). Although Soldiers are not allowed to receive both an occupation- or skill-based SRB and the Deployed SRB, they may choose the bonus of the higher amount (Congressional Budget Office, 2006). In light of the current retention challenges, the Army's bonus policies are frequently changed. Soldiers often defer reenlistment until deployed in order to receive bonuses as tax-free income.

Bonus, Extension, and Retraining (BEAR) Program

The Bonus, Extension, and Retraining Program, commonly known as the "BEAR Program," is another reenlistment initiative aimed at addressing MOS shortages (Department of the Army, 2006). Under this program, qualified Soldiers extend their reenlistment term for formal retraining in under-strength MOSs, during which time they are deployment-exempt. Upon completion of the training, Soldiers are awarded the new PMOS, reenlist, and are paid an SRB according to their new specialty. Because the BEAR program is designed to minimize MOS shortages, it is unavailable to Soldiers whose current MOS is under-strength.

Formerly Offered Reenlistment Options

The reenlistment options and incentives presented above are currently to enlisted Soldiers in the Army as of 1 June 2009, provided they meet the specific requirements. Soldiers were formerly provided with two additional reenlistment options, which are briefly mentioned here for completeness.

The Korea and Return reenlistment option offered guaranteed assignment to Korea with a follow-on assignment to one of the following locations: Fort Bragg, Campbell, Carson, Drum, Hood, Lewis, Polk, Riley, Stewart, or Europe. Soldiers were required to reenlist for a minimum of three years under this option.

Another previously offered reenlistment option allowed Soldiers to change commanders, in conjunction with duty stabilization (Army Installation focus groups and interviews, personal communication, FY06 and FY07). However, this option was discontinued because of logistical difficulties associated with it. Whether this was an Army-wide initiative or an incentive specific to Fort Hood is unclear. Because these options are no longer available, we were unable to locate further information.

Future Reenlistment Options

Upon approval, the Army plans on implementing a new Army Incentive Model (AIM) that targets the Millennial Generation, a cohort motivated by immediate rewards and incentives (McCrinkle, 2004; Strauss & Howe, 1991). Proposed changes include the Army Home Ownership (AHO) program and the Army Entrepreneur Program (AEP), in addition to allowing Soldiers to move money between the options during their time of service (Beerman, 2006). Toward the end of a Soldier's term of service, the AHO program provides a Soldier with the opportunity to use his/ her enlistment or reenlistment money for a down payment on a home, or a Soldier can elect to apply the funds to cover an existing mortgage. The AEP initiative allowed Soldiers the opportunity to transfer their enlistment bonus to a small business loan in partnership with the United States Small Business Administration (SBA).

Dimension 2: Communication of Reenlistment Benefits

In addition to offering Soldiers tangible incentives, the Army has made efforts to encourage reenlistment through communication of reenlistment benefits. Maintaining this active communication not only highlights the various benefits the Army has to offer, but also demonstrates support from the command levels. This section provides details on communication initiatives currently supported by the Army.

Army and Career Alumni Program (ACAP)

Army and Career Alumni Program (ACAP) is a program designed to help Soldiers separating from the Army, and their families, with their transition into the civilian world ("Army Career," 2006). ACAP services include job assistance, career fairs, career counseling sessions, career exploration tools, and Transition Assistance Program (TAP) training workshops. More importantly, ACAP offers another avenue for advising Soldiers about reenlistment options. ACAP encourages reenlistment through the comparison of Army earnings, benefits, and potential for advancement with what Soldiers can expect to attain in the private sector. In FY05, approximately 11,500 ACAP clients decided to reenlist ("ACAP Promotes AC Recruiting and Retention," n.d.).

Informal Communication by Leadership

Based on information gathered from interviews with Career Counselors and Officers from various Army posts (FY06 and FY07), some leaders informally communicate information about Army benefits. For example, one Brigade Commander regularly hosts a breakfast or lunch with Brigade leadership staff to discuss engagement and retention issues, as well as strategies to enhance retention once deployed. In addition, during reenlistment interviews and meetings, Reenlistment NCOs compare Army pay and benefits to those in a comparable civilian job to emphasize the dollars saved if the Soldier stays in the military. Several Company Commanders and First Sergeants also indicated that they provide pay and benefits comparison information to their Soldiers.

The following table provides a sample tool used by Reenlistment NCOs to communicate the monetary benefits of staying in the Army. Specifically, the pay and benefits of a civilian Police Patrol Officer are compared to that of an enlisted Soldier in a comparable job.

Table 3. Sample Civilian/Army Compensation Comparison

	Civilian Job	Army Job
Salary	\$45,050	\$25,495
Housing	0	\$9,552
Food Allowance	0	\$3,267
Special Pay	0	\$1,800
Tax Advantages	0	\$2,262
Health Care	-\$3,695	Included
Net Income	\$41,355	\$42,376

Source: "Benefits, Total compensation," 2006

Dimension 3: Other Reenlistment Incentives

Additional smaller-scale incentives are offered to Soldiers upon reenlistment. These incentives may not necessarily drive Soldiers' decisions to reenlist, but demonstrate the unit's appreciation and recognition of a Soldier's reenlistment. Examples include day passes, reenlistment ceremonies, time off from the duty roster, and spouse appreciation certificates. Day passes provide a Soldier with leave time ranging from two to four days. Brigade, battalion, and company-level officers are authorized to provide a Soldier with day passes upon signing a reenlistment contract (Army Installation focus groups and interviews, personal communication, FY06 and FY07). During the reenlistment ceremony, Soldiers may be recognized individually by a high-ranking official and called forward to sign the reenlistment contract. Additionally, Soldiers are provided, within reason, their desired location for the reenlistment ceremony. Soldiers may also receive a reenlistment coin to commemorate the occasion. Reenlistment ceremonies enhance a Soldier's commitment to the Army through the formalization of the reenlistment decision. Finally, spouse appreciation certificates (DA Form 5612) can be presented to the spouses of reenlisting Soldiers in an effort to recognize their support and contributions ("Spouse Appreciation," n.d.).

Work-Related Initiatives

While the previous category addressed reenlistment options and incentives that focus on the reenlistment decision itself, the Army has established a variety of programs and initiatives that target Army life more generally. By enhancing Soldiers' quality of life and/ or providing developmental opportunities, such programs may affect reenlistment decisions. This section describes initiatives that target the Soldier's work life, including educational and career development, stabilization initiatives, and the benefits provided to all active duty Soldiers.

Dimension 1: Academic Initiatives

The Army Continuing Education System (ACES) offers a variety of programs designed to assist Soldiers in achieving their educational goals (Military.com, n.d.a). By providing the resources and means to attend academic courses, Soldiers are often able to obtain degrees that would otherwise be unavailable to them. Moreover, GoArmyEd (<https://www.earmyu.com/Login.aspx>) offers a virtual gateway to assist Soldiers in utilizing ACES programs. Using GoArmyEd, Soldiers can request tuition assistance, access eArmyU, and examine the various degree programs available from accredited colleges and universities. These programs, as well as others offered by the ACES, are described in more detail below.

Army Tuition Assistance (TA)

In order to support Soldiers' professional and personal self-development goals, the Army offers financial assistance for voluntary off-duty education programs (Military.com, n.d.c). This program is open to all Soldiers on active duty, is available for both distance learning and courses offered in the classroom, and can be used for certificates and degrees ranging from a high school diploma to a master's degree. However, there are caps to the amount of money a Soldier can receive (both per credit hour and per fiscal year), and classes must be offered by an accredited organization, recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Army Degree (SOCAD)

Because Soldiers are often transferred numerous times throughout their career, there are challenges limiting their ability to complete academic degrees. Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Army Degree (SOCAD) addresses this problem by providing Soldiers with a network of colleges that accept each other's credits. Offering both associate's and bachelor's degree programs, SOCAD colleges are accessible to Army installations around the world. In addition, many degrees are available through distance learning, thereby requiring no classroom residency.

SOCAD Army Career Degrees provide the additional advantage of matching degree programs by MOS and Career Management Field (CMF; "SOCAD Army Career Degrees," n.d.). These occupation-based degrees uniquely relate to MOS skills and match MOS/ CMF competencies to specific college courses. Further, Soldiers can often earn college credit for their military training and experience, thereby minimizing the requirements for earning a degree. Such programs are designed to provide career Soldiers with a manageable method of earning a college degree, as well as assist non-career Soldiers with their transition into related civilian occupations.

eArmyU

A relatively new program, eArmyU provides college classes that are exclusively online, offering 145 certificate and degree programs across 28 regionally accredited colleges and universities ("About E ArmyU", n.d.). In addition to 100 percent tuition assistance, Soldiers enrolled in eArmyU are provided with free books, study materials, and course fees. Moreover, eligible Soldiers receive a technology package containing a free laptop computer, printer, email account, and internet access. The mission of eArmyU is to enhance retention and develop educated, technology-savvy Soldiers.

Satellite Campuses

For Soldiers who prefer traditional courses to those offered online, most Army posts provide satellite branches of local, accredited universities ("Benefits, Taking

Classes While in the Army," 2006). Such satellite branches allow Soldiers to attend traditional college courses without leaving the installation. These credits then transfer to the host university, enabling Soldiers to work toward an associate's, bachelor's, or master's degree.

Functional Academic Skills Training (FAST)

Described as the commander's primary on-duty education program, Functional Academic Skills Training (FAST) targets Soldiers with educational weaknesses that interfere with their military performance, as well as Soldiers that lack the higher education or knowledge requirements for advanced military schooling, career progression, and/ or reenlistment (Heidelberg Education Center, n.d.). Specifically, the FAST program covers job-related competencies, including basic reading, writing, math, and computer skills. Classes are offered during duty hours with no cost to Soldiers.

Installation-Specific Initiatives

In addition to the Army-wide academic initiatives detailed above, some installations and/ or units offer supplementary programs. For example, Fort Hood offers a six-month school option, whereby Soldiers who decide to stay at Fort Hood upon reenlistment are allowed two semesters of schooling (Army Installation focus groups and interviews, personal communication, FY06 and FY07). Similar incentives are offered at Fort Campbell, and this benefit is provided as a Battalion group policy in certain units at Fort Lewis. Feedback obtained at other units/ installations where interviews were conducted did not indicate any unit- or installation-specific academic initiatives. Additionally, Army installations not included in the FY06 and FY07 data collection may offer similar academic initiatives, although further information could not be located at this time.

Dimension 2: Career Development and Promotional Opportunities

The Army not only assists Soldiers in attaining their educational goals, but also helps Soldiers achieve their career objectives through a variety of career and professional development programs. The Army currently offers training for Soldiers in over 150 specialties, providing them with the necessary skills to be successful in a career either within the Army or in the civilian world.

Additionally, professional development programs, such as leadership training or specialized schools, are offered to Soldiers interested in moving up the chain of command. Details of these career development and promotional programs are provided below.

Leadership Skills Enhancement Courses (LSEC)

For Soldiers and NCOs exhibiting leadership potential, Leadership Skills Enhancement Courses (LSEC) are offered to improve their managerial, supervisory, and communication skills ("Fort Riley Website," n.d.b). LSEC classes are provided by local community colleges and held during on-duty hours at no cost to the Soldier. Family members, Department of Army (DA) civilians, and contractors are also welcome to enroll in LSEC courses. Example courses include Counseling and Human Relations, Management and Supervision, Effective Writing, and courses focused on Microsoft applications.

Special MOS Alignment Promotion Program (SMAPP)

Promotional opportunities are available to Soldiers in the corporal or specialist rank through the Special MOS Alignment Promotion Program (SMAPP; "Special MOS Alignment Promotion Program," n.d.). The SMAPP was originally implemented due to consistent shortages of Sergeants with needed skills. Under SMAPP, Soldiers serving in MOSs with promotion stagnation are offered the opportunity to reenlist for the retraining option or request reclassification into a selected MOS. Within a month after the completion of training and reclassification, the Soldier is promoted. SMAPP requirements include the following: 1) the Soldier must be in the rank of corporal or specialist promotable; 2) the Soldier must meet all qualifications of retraining and be eligible for reenlistment training; and 3) the Soldier must be serving in an over-strength (i.e., at capacity) MOS. The SMAPP provides a channel for Soldiers seeking early promotion and the opportunity to enter a new career field.

Excellence in Retention Program (ERP)

The goal of the Excellence in Retention Program (ERP) is to provide retraining opportunities to enlisted Soldiers approaching ETS and currently serving in an over-strength MOS ("Excellence in Retention Program," n.d.). After an MOS has been identified as over-strength, requests are submitted to the Army's training division to provide the operating strength status for each MOS by skill level. In turn, the data are used to determine the type of retraining needed to update the Soldier's skills. Ultimately, the ERP is designed to balance Soldiers' skills with the needs of the Army.

Army Officer Candidate School (OCS)

Army Officer Candidate School (OCS) is available to enlisted Soldiers who wish to become Commissioned Officers. Applicants are selected by a Department of the Army selection board ("Officer Candidate School," n.d.), and only about 70 percent of enlisted Soldiers who apply are accepted (Powers, n.d.). The OCS program is held at Fort Benning and involves 14 weeks of intense classroom and field training, which are divided into three phases. Phase one involves teaching

OCS candidates the basic leadership skills required of a Commissioned Officer. The second phase incorporates physical and mental challenges to strengthen the technical skills and general knowledge required as a Commissioned Officer. Finally, during the third phase, OCS candidates are tested on their leadership skills and ability to work in a team through the completion of a 15-day training mission. Overall, the OCS program is designed to mentally, physically, and emotionally prepare Soldiers for leadership roles as a Commissioned Army Officer ("Officer Candidate School," n.d.).

Green to Gold Program

The Green to Gold Program provides two other avenues for enlisted Soldiers to earn a commission as an Army Officer ("Enlisted Soldiers Earn a Commission through the Green to Gold Program," n.d.). The first option, the Green to Gold Scholarship Option, is designed for Soldiers desiring to leave active duty to attend college as ROTC cadets. Scholarships are awarded in two- to four-year increments, depending on the amount of college credit the Soldier has already earned. Specific monetary incentives under the Green to Gold Scholarship option include tuition; room and board; financial assistance for textbooks, supplies, and equipment; a monthly stipend; pay for attending the Leadership Development and Assessment Course; the Montgomery G.I. Bill (if qualified); and any additional incentives the college or university may offer. ROTC cadets not only receive the above financial benefits, but also gain leadership skills, practical experience, mentoring from the Professor of Military Science (PMS), and camaraderie from fellow ROTC cadets. Alternatively, for Soldiers who want to remain on active duty while attending college, the Army offers the Green to Gold Active Duty Option. This program is a two-year program, providing select enlisted Soldiers the opportunity to earn their baccalaureate or graduate degree and be commissioned as an Army Officer upon graduation. Benefits of the Green to Gold Active Duty Option include continuous pay and benefits of a Soldier while in the program; the Montgomery G.I. Bill (if qualified); permanent change of station (PCS) entitlements; leadership training; practical experience; mentoring from the PMS; and camaraderie. Green to Gold Program participants are required to serve in the Army for an additional eight years after graduation.

Dimension 3: Stabilization Initiatives

One of the major complaints among Soldiers across Army posts is the lack of predictability that characterizes the Army lifestyle (Army Installation focus groups and interviews, personal communication, FY06 and FY07). Due to the current needs of the Army and the number of Soldiers in specific MOSs, orders may be cancelled or changed at the last minute in order to fill mission manpower requirements. As a result, Soldiers may sometimes be moved from installation to installation or from unit to unit, negatively impacting the morale of both the Soldier and his/ her Family. In response, the Army has initiated stabilization efforts, which involve offering Soldiers a sense of predictability by guaranteeing

either installations, units, or MOSs for a specified period of time. Two examples of stabilization initiatives are described below.

Force Stabilization

Designed to increase the predictability of Army life for Soldiers and their families, Force Stabilization consists of two manning initiatives: 1) home-basing; and 2) unit-focused stability (Burlas, 2004). Home-basing offers initial entry Soldiers the opportunity to remain at their initial duty-assignment installation for six to seven years (much longer than the current three-year average). Thus, Soldiers are stabilized with their families in one location. Under home-basing, Soldiers may be deployed but return to their home station after deployment. Essentially, home-basing reduces the number of moves and provides a sense of predictability for Soldiers and their families. One drawback is that Soldiers may be reassigned to another installation for short-term assignments, depending on available vacancies and the Army's current needs. Additionally, home-basing does not apply to midterm or career Soldiers.

Under unit-focused stability, the second manning initiative, Soldiers serve in the same unit for the unit's operational cycle (i.e., 36 months). Unit-focused stability requires Soldiers to train and fight together, building readily deployable combat units and also increasing unit cohesion. However, the force stabilization efforts may sometimes conflict with the current direction of the "New Army," consisting of modular units that are interchangeable across battalions and brigades. Specifically, difficulties arise when trying to simultaneously transfer units to other installations in an effort to meet manpower strength, while also trying to provide home-basing to Soldiers and their families.

Overseas Tour Extension Incentive Program (OTEIP)

The Overseas Tour Extension Incentive Program (OTEIP) is an initiative designed to improve retention and enhance unit readiness through the increase in stabilization and turnaround times for overseas assignments ("Overseas Tour Extension Incentive Program," n.d.). Implemented in 1981, OTEIP offers Soldiers in certain overseas MOS assignments, one of four incentive options for extending their current tour an additional year. The first option is special pay (\$80 per month) for the duration of the extension. Option two provides 30 days of non-chargeable leave. Option three offers 15 days of non-chargeable leave in addition to travel arrangements to and from the continental United States. The last option involves a lump sum bonus of \$2,000 (awarded for each year of extension).

Dimension 4: Benefits

The benefits (non-pecuniary factors) a Soldier receives make up the majority of the total compensation package ("Benefits Overview, The Benefits of Being in the Army Last a Lifetime" 2006). Army benefits, such as healthcare, retirement pay,

childcare, food and housing allowance, and education, are often the driving force for reenlistment decisions, especially for those Soldiers with families (Army Installation focus groups and interviews, personal communication, FY06 and FY07). The following section describes these benefits in more detail.

Healthcare

Healthcare benefits (i.e., medical and dental) are provided to Soldiers and their families through an HMO-type plan called TRICARE ("Benefits, Health Care and Vacation," 2006). Soldiers and their families receive healthcare at Military Treatment Facilities (MTF), which are known for offering state-of-the-art technology in healthcare. Additionally, Soldiers have the option of choosing a preferred healthcare provider within the network. For those Soldiers in overseas assignments, special programs are available.

Life Insurance

Life insurance is made available to Soldiers (Active Duty and Army Reserve) through Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI), which is administered by the Office of Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance. The policy coverage ranges from \$10,000 to \$400,000 and costs \$.065 for every \$1,000 of insurance coverage regardless of the age of the Soldier ("Benefits, Health Care and Vacation," 2006).

Vacation

Active Duty Soldiers receive the following vacation hours:

- 30 days vacation time earned annually
- Weekends
- National holidays
- Sick days as needed

Although the Army provides Soldiers with time off, the Army recruiting website notes that "missions and training may require work on weekends and holidays" ("Benefits, Health Care and Vacation," 2006). Additionally, data gathered from focus groups suggests that a major reason for not reenlisting is the limited time provided to spend with Family, especially given the difficulty of obtaining approval for leave (Army Installation focus groups and interviews, personal communication, FY06 and FY07).

Cost of Living Allowances

An additional benefit to salary and bonuses is the cost of living allowances the Army provides to Soldiers ("Benefits, Allowances: Covering the Cost of Living" 2006). For Soldiers living on post, housing and food is provided. For Soldiers

who live off post, a Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS) and a Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) are provided for meals and living costs. Soldiers also receive a yearly clothing allowance to replace uniforms and uniform decorations. For those Soldiers living in an area where the cost of living is significantly higher than most locations, Soldiers receive a Cost of Living Allowance to cover the higher cost of food, transportation, clothing, and non-household items. During a PCS move, the Army provides Soldiers with a moving and relocation allowance that covers moving expenses and temporary housing. Lastly, a Family Separation Allowance is provided to Soldiers who are assigned or deployed to locations where families are not allowed to move. Soldiers receive a monthly dollar amount to cover expenses while they are away.

Mandatory Leave Early Days

The Army provides Soldiers with Mandatory Leave Early Days (Army Installation focus groups and interviews, personal communication, FY06 and FY07). For example, policies may dictate that Soldiers leave a half day early on Fridays for personal time. To ensure that Army personnel are complying with the mandate, offices are periodically checked for vacancies. While this initiative attempts to address the lack of personal and Family time available to Soldiers, it is not implemented consistently across posts. Specifically, some posts only offer one hour of leave on Fridays and others may not offer any.

Non Work-Related Initiatives

This next section shifts the focus from initiatives relevant to a Soldier's job in the Army to initiatives directed at a Soldier's quality of life outside of work. Thus, services related to recreational activities, relocation, deployment, counseling, and financial skills are included in this section. Additionally, the Army provides a variety of programs targeting the Soldier's spouse and/ or children. Because these initiatives may directly or indirectly influence the Soldier's quality of life, they are detailed in this section as well.

Dimension 1: Recreational/Leisure Activities

Through U.S. Army Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR; <http://www.armymwr.com/>, n.d.a), the Army offers a variety of recreational activities and programs for both Soldiers and their families. MWR's mission is to enhance quality of life and Soldier readiness through the continual improvement of recreational, social, educational, and personal services. While some of MWR's programs are detailed elsewhere in this technical report (e.g., ACES), this section focuses on services related to recreational opportunities.

Recreational Services

Soldiers and their families are provided with a variety of recreational options, including outdoor recreation, athletic activities, travel, arts and crafts, and entertainment. For example, Fort Riley offers adult intramural sports, bowling, a fitness center, museums, a movie theatre, a golf course, and an automotive skills center, among others ("Fort Riley Website," n.d.d). Although installations vary with regard to the specific leisure activities offered, similar programs and options are provided on posts throughout the world.

Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers (BOSS) Program

The Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers (BOSS) program was established in 1989 to respond to the recreational needs of single Soldiers, and it was expanded in 1991 by the Chief of Staff of the Army to cover all aspects of Soldiers' lives ("Fort Riley Website," n.d.a). Core components of the BOSS program include recreation and leisure, well-being, and community service. Specifically, through BOSS, Soldiers can suggest, plan, and attend such leisure events as concerts, amusement parks, and trips. Additionally, single Soldiers are provided with the means to raise issues and offer suggestions related to dining facilities, living quarters, parking, and utility concerns. Through the community service component, Soldiers can get involved in volunteer projects throughout the communities in which they live. BOSS programs exist at Army installations worldwide and, depending on the post, are often available to married Soldiers as well (U.S. Army Morale, Welfare, and Recreation, n.d.b).

Army Volunteer Corps (AVC) Program

Implemented in April 2004, the Army Volunteer Corps (AVC) program organizes volunteer efforts and establishes volunteer partnerships within the surrounding community to foster life-long volunteer commitment for interested individuals (MyArmyLifeToo.com, n.d.a). The AVC program serves as a bridge between individuals interested in volunteering and surrounding organizations in need of volunteers by providing volunteer recruitment, referral, recognition, and advocacy services. The AVC program recognizes that volunteering benefits not only the participating organizations, but also the individual by providing the opportunity to gain marketable job skills.

Family Day/Sports Day

While not a formal program, Army installations often host recreational days, such as Family Day and Sports Day, whereby a designated portion of time is set aside for recreational activities (Army Installation focus groups and interviews, personal communication, FY06 and FY07). Family Day, often termed "Mandatory Fun Day" by Soldiers, provides an opportunity for Soldiers and their families to interact in a relaxed, informal setting. A variety of outdoor sports, such as

softball, volleyball, and fishing, are generally provided, as are raffle drawings for prizes. Similarly, Sports Day involves organized activities, though the focus is specific to athletics, and families are generally not included. Both Family Day and Sports Day aim to increase camaraderie, friendship, and teamwork among Soldiers.

Armed Forces Vacation Club (AFVC)

The Armed Forces Vacation Club (AFVC) provides discount travel opportunities to personnel affiliated with the Department of Defense ("Armed Forces Entertainment," n.d.; Armed Forces Vacation Club, 2006).

The AFVC offers condominium vacations at over 3,500 resorts around the world, and vacation guides are provided to assist with travel bookings. Additionally, the Off-Duty Travelers Advantage provides travelers with discounted rates for airfare, hotel and car reservations, and cruises. Travel options exist for friends and Family members of Soldiers as well.

Dimension 2: Relocation Services

Relocation services are offered as part of a group of programs under Army Community Service (ACS). The mission of ACS is to "assist commanders in maintaining readiness of individuals, families, and communities within America's Army by developing, coordinating, and delivering services which promote self-reliance, resiliency, and stability during war and peace" (MyArmyLifeToo.com, n.d.a). ACS supports Soldiers and their families through various programs, like relocation readiness, deployment readiness, financial guidance, volunteer opportunities, military spouse employment assistance, and family-focused services. Specifically, ACS relocation assistance programs are geared towards making a Soldier's transition from one location to another as smooth as possible, whether it is within the continental United States or to an overseas assignment. The following section discusses three ACS programs focused on relocation services.

Total Army Sponsorship Program

The Total Army Sponsorship Program provides the foundation and structure for units to assist Soldiers and their spouses with relocations (U.S. Department of the Army, 2006). Upon relocation, Soldiers and their families are assigned a sponsor, who is responsible for helping them adjust to the new location. Assigned sponsors are typically of equal or higher grade than the incoming Soldier and, whenever possible, of the same sex, marital status, and military career field. This program is available to Soldiers in the active Army, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve, as well as civilian employees.

Relocation Readiness Program (RRP)

The RRP, one of the ACS programs, provides Soldiers and their families with relocation counseling, guidance, and planning services to ease the transition from one installation to another (MyArmyLifeToo.com, n.d.a). The RRP also offers helpful moving advice regarding such things as finding schools for children; tips on moving with infants, small children, or elementary school-aged children; and advice for families leaving a teenager behind. Additionally, RRP provides a family relocation checklist to help with the moving process.

Relocation Assistance Program (RAP)

The purpose of the Relocation Assistance Program (RAP), another ACS program, is to help Soldiers and their families get settled into their new home as quickly as possible (MyArmyLifeToo.com, n.d.a). Services under the RAP include education and training resources, financial assistance, and guidance and counseling. The RAP recruits sponsors, consisting of ACS volunteers, to provide clients with counseling, welcome packets, pre-move destination information, and overseas orientation briefings. Additionally, through the lending closet, Soldiers are loaned basic housekeeping items, such as highchairs, irons, plates, and kitchen utensils for a temporary period of time until the Soldiers are settled.

Standard Information Topics Exchange Service (SITES)

Standard Information Topics Exchange Service (SITES) is an internet resource consisting of a computerized information database where Soldiers and their Family members can find information on DoD installations around the world (U.S. Department of Defense, n.d.b). As long as the installation is large enough to house an ACS or Family Readiness Center (FRC), the Soldier can request a SITES information packet on that installation. Information provided by the SITES resource includes photos, maps, base floor plans, and various services and programs available on the installation. Note this information is now available through Military One Source (www.MilitaryOneSource.com) and Military Homefront (www.MilitaryHomefront.DOD.Mil/moving).

Dimension 3: Deployment Services

The Army understands that deployment is difficult and stressful for Soldiers and their families. In order to help Soldiers and their families prepare for deployment, the Army offers various resources and tools that provide information on what to expect, in addition to information on how to remain connected with other Army family members experiencing the same hardships. This section includes descriptions of Army initiatives focused on deployment.

Operation Resources for Educating about Deployment and You (Operation READY)

Operation Resources for Educating about Deployment and You (Operation READY) is an Army initiative designed to help Soldiers and Family members manage the personal, financial, and family demands of deployment (myarmyonesource.com, n.d.a). Operation READY consists of training modules, videotapes, workbooks, and other supporting materials developed for the Army by a group of Army representatives and academics. Topics covered in Operation READY materials include both pre- and post-deployment concerns, such as pre-deployment considerations, coping with separation, financial planning, staying in touch during deployment, and reunion/ readjustment upon the Soldier's return.

Family Readiness Group (FRG)

According to the Department of the Army, the Family Readiness Group (FRG) is "an organization of family members, volunteers, Soldiers, and civilian employees belonging to a unit/ organization who together provide an avenue of mutual support and assistance and a network of communication among members, the chain of command, and community resources" (U.S. Department of the Army, n.d.b). The FRG offers deployment information, training, moral support, and social outlets (activities) for family members experiencing separation from their deployed Soldiers. FRGs can be formed either at the unit or battalion level, and membership is automatic. FRG leaders are selected by the commander or by FRG group members. Today's Army places greater importance on the Soldier's Family, viewing Soldiers as "extensions of their families." Additionally, the single most important concern by Soldiers is that their families will be taken care of during times of peace and deployment (U.S. Department of the Army, n.d.b), further emphasizing the need for effective FRGs. The Department of the Army has also developed a website, the Army Virtual FRG (vFRG) Homepage (www.armyfrg.org/), to provide geographically dispersed members of the FRG a communication resource. The vFRG offers the same functionality as a traditional FRG in an online environment.

Deployment Link

The Department of Defense Office of Force Health Protection and Readiness established the "DeployMedResearchLINK," a website providing service members, veterans, and their families access to the latest medical research focused on protecting the health of deployed Soldiers (U.S. Department of Defense, Deployment Health Support Directorate, n.d.). The site includes information related to the most recent deployments (i.e., Operation Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom), as well as information organized by medical topic (e.g., accidents and injuries, mental health).

Armed Forces Entertainment

During deployment, the Department of Defense provides entertainment to U.S. military personnel through Armed Forces Entertainment ("Armed Forces Entertainment," n.d.). Armed Forces Entertainment performs over 1,200 shows around the world each year, reaching over 500,000 military personnel. Shows involve performances from famous musicians, comedians, cheerleaders, and celebrities. Armed Forces Entertainment not only boosts Soldier morale, but also helps Soldiers to feel appreciated during their tour of duty.

Operation Dear Abby

Operation Dear Abby was set up by Dear Abby, the U.S. Department of Defense, and the U.S. Department of the Navy's LifeLines Services Network (LIFELines Service Network, n.d.). It provides a private and secure online channel to send messages to U.S. servicemen (e.g., Sailor, Marine, Soldier, Airman, or Coast Guardsman). Operation Dear Abby offers a way for family members to keep in touch with and communicate support to their deployed Soldiers, especially during the holidays.

Dimension 4: Counseling/Support

The Army has created several means through which Soldiers and their families can access support and counseling services. The following section provides a brief overview of these programs. The Army has also invested heavily in professional psychology resources, including psychological health providers, facilities, and research programs. These resources are not reviewed here, as they are outside the scope of our reenlistment initiative review.

Army Mentorship Resource Center

The Army Mentorship Resource Center is a voluntary program available to all Army constituents, including Soldiers, military spouses, DA civilians, retirees, veterans, and contractors ("Army G-1 Human Resources Policy," n.d.). Provided through Army Knowledge Online, the Army Mentorship Resource Center provides resources for both mentors and protégés. Specifically, interested Army constituents can access a mentorship handbook, a sample individual development action plan, and articles documenting the benefits of mentorship relationships. Additionally, the website provides a place for individuals to register for the program, as well as a searchable mentorship profile server for mentors. Specialty mentorship programs exist for various subgroups, including African American officers, Hispanic American officers, Military Academy women, and Army spouses.

Soldier and Family Life Consultants

Anonymous and confidential support is available to Soldiers and their Family members through the Soldier and Family Life Consultants Program ("Fort Bragg MWR Website," n.d.). Although this initiative focuses on reintegration issues following deployments, life consultants are available to provide free support to Soldiers and Family members whenever necessary. Life consultants – who are experienced in topics such as family matters, relationships, raising children, and substance abuse – offer workshops, group discussions, personal consultations, and referral services (Military Family Research Institute at Purdue University, n.d.).

Chaplain Family Life Center (CFLC) and Religious Services

Chaplains are available at Army installations worldwide, with one of their primary responsibilities being to provide quality, confidential counseling services to Soldiers and Family members. Although posts vary in the specific programs offered, sample services include marriage and family therapy, a prevention and relationship enhancement program (PREP), suicide prevention, and family training in communication skills, conflict prevention, and family team building ("Fort Wainwright Website," n.d.). Spiritual guidance is also available through chaplains, who provide religious instruction; moral, ethical, and religious support; and religious services to those in the military community (Center of Military History United States Army, 1977).

Dimension 5: Financial Services

The financial services dimension of non work-related initiatives covers programs designed to assist Soldiers in managing their monetary affairs. Included in this section are both proactive training initiatives and reactive monetary assistance programs.

Financial Readiness Program (FRP)

Offered under ACS, the Financial Readiness Program (FRP) focuses on educating Soldiers and their spouses about money-related topics ("Financial Readiness Program," 2003.). Workshops and resources cover such subjects as budget planning, debt management, proper use of credit, consumer advocacy, deployment/ relocation preparation, and check-writing principles. Additionally, FRP counselors are available to provide debt-liquidation services, file consumer complaints, and offer tax information. First-term enlisted Soldiers are required to attend a subset of the classes offered by FRP, called Personal Financial Readiness Training, which covers basic money management.

Army Emergency Relief (AER)

Founded in 1942 by the Secretary of War and the Army Chief of Staff, the Army Emergency Relief (AER) is a nonprofit organization designed to assist Soldiers and their dependents in dealing with financial crises (Military.com, n.d.b). Using funds generated from voluntary contributions, repayment of interest-free loans, and investment income, AER can help provide those in need with food, rent, utilities, emergency transportation, medical bills, and other essential expenses. AER is available to active and retired Soldiers, as well as their dependents and widow(er)s.

Dimension 6: Spouse Services

Because military spouses play a major role in reenlistment decisions, the Army has created numerous programs, or expanded upon existing programs, to target Soldiers' spouses. These cover such domains as academic training, employment assistance resources, and social support. Although many of the previously described initiatives are available to both Soldiers and their spouses, this section focuses on programs designed specifically for the spouse.

Academic Initiatives

Similar to the programs afforded to Soldiers, the Army also offers opportunities and funding to spouses who wish to further their academic training. For example, the Spouse Education Assistance Program (EAP) targets spouses of servicemembers who are assigned to Europe, Korea, Japan, or Okinawa, offering up to \$350 per term for education-related expenses ("Army Education Programs;" military.com, n.d.a). The program is funded by Army Emergency Relief and does not cover graduate courses and off-post schools.

Other academic initiatives are available to spouses as well. For example, Army spouses can take advantage of SOCAD (described above), thus minimizing the potentially negative impact of relocations on their academic pursuits. Moreover, individual Army installations may initiate additional academic initiatives. For example, Fort Hood offers education incentives to Soldiers and their spouses, provided the Soldier agrees to stay on post for four years (Army Installation focus groups and interviews, personal communication, FY06 and FY07).

As of July 2006, the Army announced a pilot program designed to allow the transfer of Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) benefits to military spouses. Specifically, eligible Soldiers have the option to transfer up to 18 to 36 months of their MGIB entitlement (U.S. Army News Service, 2006).

Spouse Career and Employment Readiness

Many Army installations are positioned in remote locations, thereby limiting the employment opportunities available to Army spouses. The problem is often aggravated by the frequent relocations demanded by Army life. To address this issue, many resources have been created to assist spouses with employment-related concerns. For example, the stated mission of the Employment Readiness Program (ERP) is "To assist clients in overcoming the difficulties associated with finding employment during relocation through education, training opportunities, job search assistance and career planning" ("Fort Riley Website," n.d.c). An ACS program, ERP provides access to a job search engine specifically designed for military spouses, in addition to offering workshops on interviewing skills, entrepreneurialism, resume and cover letter writing, and self-assessment.

Other employment-related programs are available to Army spouses as well. To assist military spouses in finding employment, the military has partnered with Adecco, the world's largest staffing company. The resulting program, entitled Adecco Career Accelerator, provides military spouses with career counseling, training, and job placement services at no cost to the military or the spouses. Further, using funding from the National Emergency Grant program, ACS provides job-training opportunities to spouses at various installations nationwide; however, this program may cease to exist in the near future (Zuckerbrod, 2006).

Army spouses can also access helpful virtual resources. Both the Military Spouse Career Center ([http:// www.military.com/ spouse](http://www.military.com/spouse); U.S. Department of Defense, n.d.a) and the Resource Library for Military Spouse Employment, Education, and Relocation Information ([http:// www.milspouse.org/](http://www.milspouse.org/); MILSpouse.org) offer links to a variety of employment-related information, with the latter also providing information on education and training opportunities, general relocation resources, and other benefits and services. Another website, entitled the Military Spouses' Career Network ([http:// www.mscn.org/](http://www.mscn.org/)), markets military spouses to employers.

A final initiative designed to assist spouses with locating employment is called Military Spouse Preference. Derived from Title 10 of the United States Code, this statute is geared for military spouses who relocate to accompany their spouse on a permanent change of station. Individuals falling in this category can request hiring preference for DoD vacancies ("Navy Fleet and Family Support Programs," n.d.).

Support/Information

To help Army spouses adjust to and cope with Army life, the Army offers programs designed to provide spouses with social support and informational resources. Army Family Team Building (AFTB) is a volunteer-led organization that provides training and knowledge to spouses and family members

(MyArmyOneSource.com, n.d.). Programs are divided into three levels, targeting family members at various stages of Army life. Level I focuses on basic skills and knowledge necessary to adjust to military life, while Level II offers intermediate classes such as management skills, problem solving, and leadership. Finally, the most advanced courses are included in Level III, which teaches participants how to inspire and mentor others into leadership positions. AFTB is an ACS program.

Another program available to spouses is the Enlisted Spouses Club (ESC) (e.g., “Fort Hood Area Enlisted Spouses’ Club,” n.d.). Available at various Army posts worldwide, ESC offers a social outlet to spouses of enlisted Soldiers. Activities range from supporting volunteer organizations, like the American Red Cross and the Ronald McDonald House, to hosting social gatherings, like bake sales, cookoffs, and movie nights. Further, ESC offers emotional support to spouses during deployment. Often, childcare is available during ESC events as well.

The Family Wellness Center provides a central location for family members to gather and acquire information (“Fort Irwin Website,” n.d.). Specifically, the Family Wellness Center holds FRG meetings, communicates news on deployed Soldiers, and offers a forum to meet other Soldiers’ Family members. Although various installations may have a designated Family Wellness Center, information could only be found on the Fort Irwin center, so it is unclear whether this is a universal service offered across Army posts.

Dimension 7: Child Services

Given that a significant portion of enlisted Soldiers are parents, the Army recognizes the need to offer programs specifically targeting Army children. As described in this section, the Army offers a variety of services for kids of all ages, including programs related to education, supervision, recreation, and support.

Child, Youth & School Services (CYS)

Child, Youth & School Services (CYS), which is a part of MWR, aims to reduce the conflict between mission and parental responsibilities by providing a safe and high-quality environment for children of Soldiers (U.S. Army Morale, Welfare, and Recreation, n.d.c). CYS programs are geared toward children of various ages, offering services for children as young as four weeks and as old as 18 years. Family Child Care (FCC) is available to children ranging from four weeks to 12 years of age, and the Child Development Center (CDC) offers full-time care and developmentally age appropriate programs for children ranging from six weeks to five years old. School Age Services (SAS) provides activities such as arts and crafts, music and sports, bowling, fine arts, and computer labs, as well as before and after school care and summer camps for elementary school-aged children. Similar options are offered for older children through Middle School and Teens (MS&T) Youth Services (YS). School Support Initiatives offer programs to help schools and families prepare for transitioning military-family

students. Finally, youth sports programs and instructional classes are available to children of all ages.

In addition to providing supervision and recreational activities for youth, CYS also includes Child and Youth Liaison Educational Outreach Services (CLEOS), which is composed of Youth Education Support Services (YESS) and Outreach Services (OS). The programs offer resources for parents, including parent education programs, babysitter training and referrals, information on local school systems, and resources related to home schooling. Sample CYS programs are described on the following installation websites:

<http://www.fortsamhoustonmwr.com/cys/Default2.asp>

<http://www.eustismwr.com/eustismwr.phtml?pageid=41>

Schools of Knowledge, Inspiration, Exploration, and Skills (SKIES) Unlimited

Schools of Knowledge, Inspiration, Exploration, and Skills (SKIES) Unlimited was introduced by CYS as a "groundbreaking instructional program initiative" ("Fort Eustis and Fort Story Website," n.d.b). Although CYS has offered instructional youth programs for many years, SKIES Unlimited is unique in that it includes programs with a standardized and formal structure. Because of the breadth and depth of this initiative, it is described separately from the other CYS programs.

SKIES Unlimited aims to provide countless learning opportunities across a variety of domains, with children of all ages having equal access. By embodying the experimental learning model, SKIES Unlimited is designed to provide a nurturing and educational environment for all participants. Composed of four "schools," the initiative offers activities related to sports (e.g., sports clinic, gymnastics camp); life skills (e.g., Tae Kwon Do, public speaking, babysitter training course); art (e.g., musical instruments, photography, dance); and academics (e.g., college fair, homework club). The word "unlimited" in the title is to denote the limitless learning possibilities provided by this program.

Military Student Website

An official DoD website, <http://www.militarystudent.dod.mil/> (U.S. Department of Defense, n.d.c) is geared toward assisting with transition- and deployment-related issues pertaining to children. The website offers resources for a variety of constituents, including children, parents, installation commanders, and school leaders. For example, an installation commander toolkit provides information regarding how commanders can coordinate with school systems, parents, and the community to ensure a smooth transition for relocated children. Similar toolkits exist for parents and school leaders, and the state data bank for educational requirements is also provided. In terms of the children themselves, sections are provided for children aged six through 12, as well as for teenagers, that include chat rooms, information related to transitions and deployments, and other resources.

Dimension 8: General Information

Based on the above descriptions of non work-related initiatives, it appears that the Army directs a significant amount of time and effort toward developing programs that sustain and enhance the quality of life for Soldiers and their families. However, without proper communication, Soldiers may not be accurately informed about these programs and, consequently, may never take advantage of all the services the Army has to offer. The following initiatives share the common goal of effective dissemination of information regarding Army programs and services.

Army Knowledge Online (AKO)

The Army Knowledge Online (AKO) website ([http:// www.army.mil/ ako/](http://www.army.mil/ako/)) can be considered the Army's version of a corporate intranet, providing Soldiers secure access to classified and unclassified military information, data, tools, and services. For instance, during Hurricane Katrina, the AKO website served as a one-stop resource for hurricane disaster recovery information. In particular, the website included links to relevant agencies, such as the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA), the American Red Cross, and the National Hurricane Center, in addition to resources to contact and locate displaced family members. The success of AKO is not only evident through its assistance during natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina, but also through its 1.8 million registered users.

Army OneSource

The Army OneSource is a 24 hour/ 7 days per week website and phone referral service providing active duty Soldiers and their families with services addressing daily life demands. Army OneSource provides information and solutions to a variety of life matters, such as military childcare, deployment, money management, and adjustment to the military lifestyle. In addition, the Army OneSource offers non-medical counseling services, consisting of face-to-face sessions with a licensed counselor in the local community at no cost to Soldiers or their Family members. Non-medical counseling services include marital/ couple issues, parent-child issues, grief counseling, problems readjusting to home and garrison life post deployment, divorce, and coping with career/ job stress.

The Army OneSource is now part of the Military OneSource service. In February 2005, the DoD consolidated the OneSource service programs from each branch in an effort to market the program more effectively. The Army OneSource website is accessible through either www.armyonesource.com or www.militaryonesource.com.

Well-Being Liaison Office (WBLO)

The Well-Being Liaison Office (WBLO) aims to ensure "the effective delivery of Well-Being programs to the Army and its constituent communities" (Army Well-Being, n.d.d). As such, it offers a variety of tools and resources that communicate information about the various well-being initiatives. For example, the Army Family Online website ([http:// www.armyfamiliesonline.org/](http://www.armyfamiliesonline.org/); Army Well-Being, n.d.a) is a virtual resource where Soldiers and their families can readily access information on topics promoting family well-being before, during, and after deployments. Example resources available on the website include general information on the deployment process, a parent's guide on how to deal with the stress of deployment, victim assistance programs, and sexual assault awareness information.

Another WBLO tool is the Army Well-Being magazine. This quarterly publication is accessible through the Internet and provides Soldiers and their families with information on various topics like pay and compensation, health, education and development, family programs, housing, and workplace programs (Army Well-Being, n.d.c). The magazine is produced only in electronic form and is distributed through subscription-based email. Additionally, it is available on Army Families Online and Army Knowledge Online.

For Soldiers and Family members with specific questions, the Army Information Line is a toll-free 1-800 number providing the latest information, resources, and referral services addressing Army Life concerns (Army Well-Being, n.d.b). The Army Information Line is staffed by trained liaisons and is available from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM EST.

MyArmyLifeToo

Sponsored by the Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Command (FMWRC) Family Programs Directorate, MyArmyLifeToo ([http:// www.myarmylifetoo.com/](http://www.myarmylifetoo.com/); MyArmyLifetoo.com, n.d.a) provides a central source of information for family members. A structured website, MyArmyLifeToo details numerous programs available to Soldiers and their families, including many of the initiatives described in this technical report. Programs are categorized into Army basics, child and youth services, work and career, and managing deployment, among others.

Group-Level Initiatives

Reenlistment initiatives discussed up to this point have centered on individual Soldiers and/ or their families. The focus of this section is on reenlistment initiatives targeting the group as a whole (i.e., an installation or the Army).

Dimension 1: Awards

Although the majority of reenlistment initiatives operate Army-wide, installations may take additional steps to increase retention at their particular posts. Various entities, including the Army, DoD, and military, have recognized the importance of providing incentives for installation-specific efforts. To that end, several awards are available to posts that have made particularly noteworthy contributions or accomplishments. Examples of these awards are described in this section.

The Commander in Chief's (CINC) Award

The Commander in Chief's (CINC) award is an annual award recognizing the outstanding and innovative efforts of the individuals who operate and maintain U.S. military installations (Office of the Deputy under Secretary of Defense of Installations and Environment, n.d.). The CINC award is presented annually to the top Army, Navy, Marine, and Air Force installation and to the top Defense Logistics Agency. Award criteria include how the command best utilizes its resources to sustain the mission, to increase the productivity of the workforce, and to enhance the quality of life for all who live and work on the installation.

The Army Communities of Excellence (ACOE) Award

The Army Communities of Excellence (ACOE) Award is another award presented annually to top installations demonstrating continuous business process improvement (U.S. Department of the Army, n.d.a). The criteria for the ACOE Award are based on the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award criteria, which consist of seven categories: 1) leadership; 2) strategic planning; 3) customer and market focus; 4) measurement, analysis, and knowledge management; 5) human resource focus; 6) process management; and 7) results.

Spouse Employment Demonstration Project

Sponsored by the DoD, the Spouse Employment Demonstration Project was a one-time incentive awards program designed to provide funding for innovative installation employment initiatives (Kozaryn, 1997). Specifically, installations across all branches were invited to submit proposals, detailing potential spouse employment programs for military spouses. The DoD awarded over \$210,000 a year over a three-year period to 10 winning installations. Winning proposals included programs to provide language, computer, and other job skills training; career counseling; support groups; and an internet job source homepage to link spouses with local employers. Although Army posts were invited to participate in this initiative, none of the 34 installations submitting proposals were Army-affiliated.

Dimension 2: Other Group-Level Initiatives

In addition to awards for reenlistment-related action, other group-level initiatives exist. Two such initiatives are described in this section.

Army Well-Being

The purpose of the Army Well-Being program is to coordinate efforts related to enhancing the personal, physical, material, mental, and spiritual state of Soldiers (U.S. Department of the Army, n.d.c). Specifically, Army Well-Being integrates existing quality of life initiatives and programs, such as TRICARE, the Morale, Welfare, and Recreation program, Child, Youth & School Services, and Army One Source, into a Well-Being framework. The Army Well-Being framework identifies three types of Soldier needs: 1) the need to live; 2) the need to connect; and 3) the need to grow. The *need to live* represents programs that provide the basic physical and material needs related to food, shelter, and safety. The *need to connect* refers to initiatives centered around acceptance, contribution, and social interaction. Finally, the *need to grow* addresses programs focusing on mental and spiritual needs. In addition to Soldier needs, the framework incorporates an "Intangibles" component that includes contextual factors that may either inhibit or promote Army well-being, such as command climate, leadership, turbulence, predictability, and teamwork. Through proper communication of the Army Well-Being effort and through effective measurement of results via the Army Well-Being Status Report (WBSR), the Army Well-Being directorate hopes to satisfy the needs of the Soldier and the overall Army in order to maximize outcomes, such as performance, readiness, retention, and recruiting.

Army Family Action Plan (AFAP)

The Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) provides Soldiers and Family members an avenue for communicating feedback to Army leadership about current Army initiatives (MyArmyLifeToo.com, n.d.a). AFAP feedback ideally results in changes in legislation, policies, and programs to improve retention and increase Army family well-being. At the local level, AFAP forums are held at the installation to identify issues and potential resolutions. Issues that cannot be resolved at the local level are sent to the Department of Army Headquarters, where representatives determine which issues will be sent to AFAP.

Command Climate Survey

While AFAP provides Soldiers with an avenue for communicating problems to the installation and the DA, Command Climate Surveys are intended as a tool by which Soldiers can provide anonymous feedback to their unit leadership. The Command Climate Survey covers such unit factors as leadership, cohesion, morale, and the human relations environment, and the results are provided to Company Commanders (U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and

Social Sciences, n.d.). Two versions of the survey exist – an automated, Windows-based version, which automatically compiles and analyzes the results, and a paper and pencil version. A Training Module is also available to guide Commanders through the administration, scoring, and interpretation process. The Command Climate Survey is designed to be administered by Commanders within 90 days of assuming command and annually thereafter (Army Installation focus groups and interviews, personal communication, FY06 and FY07).

Reenlistment Initiatives Implemented in Other Military Branches

In order to determine whether other U.S. Military branches offer any unique reenlistment initiatives, a limited review of Navy, Marine, and Air Force initiatives was conducted. Based on our limited search, it appears that all four branches offer similar programs, with some variations. In fact, many of the initiatives described above are also directly available to other service members, including Operation Dear Abby, SITES, the Armed Forces Vacation Club, and Military Spouse Preference. Programs existing in one branch are often parallel to those in the Army, though generally under a different name. Examples of this include SOCNAV (the Navy equivalent of SOCAD), Marine Corps Family Team Building (similar to AFTB), and Air Force OneSource (analogous to Army OneSource).

Despite the overall continuity in reenlistment initiatives across the services, each branch offers a variety of unique programs. Still, they are all fairly similar in scope and can be classified under the same organizational framework used in this report to describe Army initiatives. Given the considerable overlap in reenlistment initiatives across branches, a full summary of Marine, Navy, and Air Force initiatives is not required. However, a few select initiatives are described below, chosen for their distinctiveness from the Army programs previously mentioned.

StayNavy Career Tools (Navy)

The Navy offers StayNavy Career Tools, which is a website geared toward helping Sailors make informed decisions about their career (Naval Personnel Command, Bureau of Naval Personnel, n.d.a). Included on the website are a pay and compensation calculator, which provides a side-by-side comparison of a Navy career and a civilian career; a retirement calculator, which enables Sailors to forecast their military retirement income; and a selective reenlistment bonus calculator, which estimates the bonus amount a Sailor can expect. Additionally, a voluntary web-based questionnaire (entitled "ARGUS survey") invites Sailors, who are at key career milestones (e.g., promotion/ advancement, reenlistment, separation from active duty), to report factors influencing their career decisions. Moreover, Sailors can request that sponsors from their new command be assigned to assist with transitions. Although the Army offers many of these

services to its Soldiers, it is generally via informal communication rather than a formal website.

Automated Career Retention System (ACRS; Marine Corps)

The Marine Corps recently implemented an Automated Career Retention System (ACRS), a web-based system designed to provide Marines with the tools to manage their own career and facilitate interaction between Marines and retention personnel (Brown, 2006). Specifically, Marines, career retention specialists, and Commanding Officers can communicate via an interview management system. Marines also have the ability to view available duty assignments and request a specific one. The ACRS is a replacement of the Total Forces Retention System and is designed to standardize the retention process across units, providing the ability to track Marines throughout their military career. This system diverges from the Army's retention process in that Soldiers are dependent upon Reenlistment NCOs and career counselors to communicate their reenlistment options. Additionally, the Army does not provide an online interview management system for Soldiers to utilize.

Navy Retention Monitoring System (NRMS; Navy)

The Navy Retention Monitoring System was designed to replace two legacy retention reporting systems: Navy Retention (NAVRET) database and Retention Monitoring System (RMS; Weitzman, 2005). The NRMS has the ability to report and analyze retention data, taking "retention analysis to new levels of capability" (Weitzman, 2005, p. 1). The web-based system provides universal access across individual commands, which, in turn, allows for a common standard for reporting retention statistics. Thus, results are directly comparable and can be reported in list, cube, and ad hoc form. For example, Career Counselors have pre-formatted, list-style reports available to them, including attrition and honor roll reports. Cube reports allow for trend analysis, and analysts can filter data by gender, ratings, and zone, among other options. Such reports are intended to guide Center for Career Development (CCD) and Enlisted Community Manager (ECM) analysts in setting retention goals. Finally, the ad hoc analysis option allows users to perform a "nearly infinite combination" of queries, letting the user "answer virtually any retention question imaginable" (Weitzman, 2005, p. 2). Because the NRMS provides information dating back to 1992, historical trends can also be assessed. At the time the Weitzman report was written (2005), the Navy had plans to use the system to automatically send Command Career Counselors (CCCs) standard monthly reports with statistics relevant to their individual command; however, it is unclear whether this goal has been realized.

"Under My Wing" (UMW) Mentoring Program (Navy)

Similar to the Army Mentorship Resource Center, the Navy provides a mentoring program entitled "Under My Wing" (UMW; Naval Personnel

Command, Bureau of Naval Personnel, n.d.b). Although the two programs share many features, the Navy program appears to be more formal in its execution, so it is described here as a comparison.

The "Under My Wing" Mentorship Program is voluntary, though the Commanding Officer (CO) or Executive Officer (XO) can require participation for Sailors who have the potential of becoming disciplinary problems onboard ship. Under this program, the Mentor and Protégé formally define desired outcomes in a written contract. Mentors and Protégés are then encouraged to maintain contact for at least two hours a week for six months. At that point, the two jointly determine if the relationship is to continue. During the mentoring relationship, Mentors are expected to answer the Protégé's questions about what the Navy has to offer, as well as help them chart a course toward desirable career outcomes. The UMW program is part of the Navy's "SMARTS" initiative, which stands for Sailors Motivated About Responsibility toward Self-Development. SMARTS has various components, including cultural, spiritual, financial, career, and educational; and Mentors are expected to offer guidance in each of these areas, depending upon the Protégé's needs.

Evaluation of Army Initiatives

As indicated by our review, a variety of Army initiatives have been implemented with the goal of increasing reenlistment among enlisted Soldiers. Despite the abundance of Army programs targeting retention, very little research has evaluated the effectiveness of these initiatives. The research that we located in our literature search is summarized in this section, by type of reenlistment initiative (e.g., reenlistment bonuses, academic initiatives, and spouse services). Following the research examining specific initiatives is a section termed General Evaluation of Army Programs. This section summarizes research that has examined the overall impact of Army programs, as well as articles examining initiatives in relation to each other. Next, a brief section examining factors related to program use is discussed. Finally, anecdotal information with regard to Soldiers' awareness of and attitudes toward various retention initiatives is provided. While the majority of the "Evaluation of Initiatives" section focuses on empirical research, the last section is based on personal communications collected from Army Installation focus groups and interviews (FY06 and FY07). We conclude with an overall assessment of research and anecdotal evidence regarding the effectiveness of reenlistment initiatives. Given the limited number of evaluation articles, studies that addressed outcomes such as morale, commitment, and stress, in addition to reenlistment intentions, are discussed, as are studies that focused on other U.S. military branches, provided that the initiative under investigation closely aligned with an Army intervention (e.g., tuition assistance).

Reenlistment Bonus

The majority of studies evaluating the effects of Army initiatives on reenlistment decisions focused on selective reenlistment bonuses (SRBs). For example, Hogan, Espinosa, Mackin, and Greenston (2005) applied a logit model to estimate the effect of SRBs on the retention rates of Army Soldiers by occupational type and term (first, second, and third). Data were analyzed at three levels of aggregation: all Army, Career Management Field (CMF), and Military Occupational Specialty (MOS). Results indicated that across all levels of aggregation, first-term reenlistment was significantly impacted by SRBs. Specifically, a one-level increase in SRBs typically increased the reenlistment rate by three to seven percent, depending on MOS. Second- and third-term reenlistment decisions showed similar patterns of results, though the effects were less pronounced. Additionally, SRBs were even more predictive of reenlistment decisions when civilian unemployment rates and Army downsizing periods were taken into account.

The impact of reenlistment bonuses on Army retention was also examined in a literature review by Coker (1997). Although the article primarily focused on the Army Reserve, Coker's review highlighted the positive impact that bonuses can have on a Soldier's decision to stay in the Army. For example, junior enlisted personnel cited bonuses as particularly important to their decision to reenlist in the Army Reserve, though senior enlisted members were more influenced by retirement benefits (Defense Manpower Data Center, 1987). Similarly, in the 1994 Survey of Troop Program Unit (TPU) Members, 63 percent of enlisted Soldiers cited reenlistment bonuses as a factor influencing their decision to stay in the Reserves, with 26 percent of those Soldiers describing bonuses as contributing "a great deal" (Office of the Chief, Army Reserve, 1996, as cited in Coker, 1997).

Other studies have examined the impact that reenlistment bonuses have on commitment lengths and actual time served in the Reserves. For instance, Grissmer, Doering, and Sachar (1982) conducted an experiment, with a "bonus group" and a control group. Individuals in the bonus group were offered a reenlistment bonus for a three- or six-year reenlistment commitment, while no bonus was offered to individuals in the control group. Results of their investigation indicated that 82 percent of individuals in the bonus group chose to reenlist for a three- or six-year term, while only 13 percent of individuals in the control group chose longer terms of service. Moreover, in a follow-up study, Grissmer and Hiller (1983) found that the attrition rates were six percent lower among the bonus recipients, as compared to individuals in the control group. ARI found similar results: Using data previously collected by the RAND Corporation and an empirical Bayes approach, Dale (1987) revealed that reenlistment bonuses increased the average length of commitment as well as retention rates among Soldiers in the Army Reserve. Additionally, results suggested that six-year bonuses were more cost effective than three-year bonuses.

Finally, in addition to finding that bonuses positively impact retention, research suggests that the *amount* of the bonus can impact retention rates and commitment length. Larger bonuses were associated with increased six-year reenlistment contracts and decreased three-year reenlistment contracts among Army Reservists (Dale, 1987).

Clearly, much research has investigated the impact that reenlistment bonuses have on reenlistment decisions. Results converge to indicate that reenlistment bonuses have positively affected Army retention, with bonuses impacting reenlistment rates, committed man-years of service, and attrition rates. However, because much of this research was conducted with the Army Reserve, it is unclear whether findings generalize to first-term enlisted Soldiers.

Academic Initiatives

Research examining the effects of educational initiatives on overall retention has focused primarily on the impact of tuition assistance (TA) programs (e.g., Alley, Bolton, Findley, Mosley, Mwambola, Renehan, et al., 1995; Boesel & Johnson, 1988; Brauchle, 1998; & Garcia, Joy, & Reese, 1998). For example, in a sample of Air Force enlisted personnel, Alley and his colleagues (1995) administered a survey assessing attitudes toward the current tuition assistance programs and off-duty educational opportunities. Based on their findings, 93 percent of the Air Force sample agreed that the tuition assistance program is a valuable DoD program. Additionally, 72 percent of the respondents felt that tuition assistance programs improve the retention of quality enlisted personnel, and 65 percent agreed that one of the major reasons enlisted personnel decide to remain in the Air Force is for the educational opportunities. Although Alley et al. (1995) operationalized reenlistment as general attitudes toward educational initiatives rather than measuring actual reenlistment behavior, their findings support the value of offering educational programs.

Boesel and Johnson's (1988) research assessed actual reenlistment behavior as impacted by tuition assistance across all branches of the military. Based on the 1985 DoD survey data, they found that the 'failure to reenlist' rate was much higher among military personnel who did not participate in tuition assistance programs (35.8 percent failed to reenlist) compared to those who did (18.6 percent failed to reenlist). Moreover, Brauchle (1998) extended Boesel and Johnson's (1988) study through the analysis of the 1992 DoD survey data and found a significant, although weak, relationship ($r = .17, p < .05$) between participation in educational initiatives¹ and self-reported intentions to reenlist. Similarly, Sticha, Dall, Handy, Espinosa, Hogan & Young (2003) found that

¹ Participation in educational initiatives was determined by comparing their level of education at time of enlistment and their current level of education at the time of the survey. Thus, participation in educational initiatives was operationalized as an increase in level of education.

participation in TA and Functional Academic Skills Training (FAST) was positively associated with probability of first-term reenlistment. Specifically, TA participation was associated with a 7.6 percent increase in propensity to reenlist, while FAST participation was associated with a 1.4 percent increase in propensity to reenlist. Their study examined enlisted Soldiers who began and completed their first contract term during an evaluation period of October 1995 through September 2001. Additionally, the authors attempted to control for opportunity to participate in TA by statistically controlling for contract length, marital status, and career management field, among other variables. (See Sticha, DiFazio, Dall, Handy, & Heggestad, 2003 for additional information on the study's background and development.)

Garcia and his colleagues (1998) also investigated the relationship between educational initiatives and reenlistment by analyzing the impact of the Navy's Voluntary Education (VOLED) Program. Tuition assistance is the largest of the four components comprising the VOLED Program. Results suggest that Sailors who participated in the VOLED Program exhibited higher reenlistment rates than non-participants. Specifically, reenlistment rates went up with increased credit hours earned, suggesting that the more Sailors took advantage of the VOLED Program, the more likely they were to reenlist (Garcia et al., 1998).

Although the research presents a positive relationship between tuition assistance and retention, there is a potential concern with this finding. Specifically, individuals with higher abilities were more likely to use tuition assistance programs. Therefore, ability may function as a confounding variable and may influence reenlistment instead of actual participation in educational incentive programs. In an effort to resolve this issue, Buddin and Kapur (2002) utilized two statistical estimation techniques (i.e., a bivariate probit model and a propensity score model) to control for potential confounding variables and to isolate the effects of tuition assistance on reenlistment. Contrary to previous findings, their results suggested that Marines and Sailors participating in tuition assistance programs were *less* likely to reenlist after their first term compared to non-participants (Buddin & Kapur, 2002). The authors proposed two reasons for this finding. First, under the GI Bill, college expenses are covered after service with the military. Second, deployments and work schedules delay completion of a college degree in a timely manner.

In addition to tuition assistance, studies have examined alternative educational initiatives offered by the Army, such as the Basic Skills Education Program (BSEP). BSEP was the Army's formal program providing remedial academic skills training to its Soldiers². In order to qualify for BSEP, Soldiers must score below 100 on the General Technical component of the ASVAB. Based on archival data and field visits to select Army installations, ARI found that BSEP graduates were more likely to reenlist (37.9 percent reenlistment rate) than a comparison

² FAST (Functional Academic Skills Training) is the current program replacing BSEP.

group who decided not to participate in BSEP (11.0 percent reenlistment rate; Simutis, Ward, Harman, Farr, & Kern, 1988).

Taken together, the above research suggests that educational initiatives impact not only attitudes towards reenlistment, but also actual reenlistment behavior. However, research examining other educational initiatives beyond tuition assistance, such as the impact of virtual programs like eArmyU and satellite campuses, is needed. Additionally, the effectiveness of educational programs offered to military spouses should be investigated.

Pay and Benefits

Providing pay and benefits comparable to those provided in the civilian sector continues to be a growing concern of the military in terms of its impact on retention. Literature evaluating the impact of the Army's compensation and benefits system has looked specifically at the Army's pay, retirement plan, and medical care benefits.

Historically, in order to attract a population of youth with no criminal records, excellent health, and higher aptitudes, the Army has had to offer pay at the 70th percentile of civilian pay in order to compete with the civilian sector (Asch, Hosek, & Warner, 2001). This is being met for recruits coming in with a high school education. However, as more high school graduates choose to obtain a college degree, military compensation becomes increasingly imbalanced. That is, for the college educated population, Army pay is more consistently at the 50th percentile when compared to civilian sector opportunities. Compounding this disparity is the increasing importance of obtaining a higher education within and outside the military.

In order to assess military members' attitudinal reactions to existing Army pay and benefit programs, the U.S. ARI administers a survey bi-annually to a group of randomly selected Officers and enlisted personnel. The survey, entitled the Sample Survey of Military Personnel (SSMP), assesses Soldiers' satisfaction with their jobs and quality of life. Results from prior SSMPs reported improvements in satisfaction with Army retirement benefits over a ten-year period from 1993 to 2002 for both officers and enlisted personnel (U.S. Army News Service, 2002). Similarly, over the same ten-year period, satisfaction with Army pay has increased for both officers and enlisted personnel. See Tables 3 and 4 below.

Table 4: Percent Satisfied with Retirement Benefits

	1993	1998	2002
Enlisted	44%	29%	56%
Officers	55%	36%	65%

Table 5: Percent Satisfied with Basic Pay

	1993	1998	2002
Enlisted	36%	29%	38%
Officers	61%	58%	64%

Note: Information in the above tables were obtained from U.S. Army News Service, 2002

Further, in that article, ARI attributed the increases in satisfaction to larger pay raises compared to those in the mid 1990s and to improvements to the retirement system in 2000.

In addition to assessing military members' satisfaction with pay and retirement benefits, research has examined the impact of pay and retirement benefits on retention, specifically *predicted* reenlistment rates. For example, in FY00, Congress enacted the National Defense Authorization Act that modified the military's pay and benefit system to improve active duty and retention (Asch, Hosek, Arkes, Fair, Sharp, & Totten, 2002). The act, also known as TRIAD, raised military pay, increased bonus ceilings and special pays, and reformed military retirement benefit options. Asch and her colleagues (2002) predicted the effects of TRIAD on reenlistment by incorporating estimates of reenlistment elasticity with respect to pay and the size of the pay increase, in addition to reenlistment elasticity with respect to unemployment. Overall, results suggested that TRIAD's changes predicted increases in reenlistment from FY00 to FY01.

The unique effects of retirement benefits have also been examined. Research has investigated the effects of changes to the Army's retirement system on retention (e.g., Eisenhower, 1999). In a sample of enlisted personnel, Eisenhower (1999) investigated the effects of the Army's three different retirement plans: 1) the original Final Basic Pay Plan (FBPP); 2) the High-Three-Year Plan (HTYP); and 3) the REDUX plan (implemented in 1986) on retention, operationalized as reenlistment rates. The first plan, the FBPP, provides a retiree with 50 percent of basic pay after 20 years of service and an additional 2.5 percent for every year beyond 20, up to a maximum of 75 percent of base pay. For the most part, the second plan, the HTYP is the same as the FBPP. The only difference is that the HTYP base pay is calculated based on the average of the highest 36 months of base pay. Finally, the current retirement plan, REDUX, reduces the value of retired pay in two ways. First, REDUX provides only 40 percent of the average of the last three years of basic pay after 20 years of service. Second, there is a cap placed on annual cost-of-living adjustments. The study tracked reenlistment rates from 1986 to 1997 and, contrary to what was expected, found a negative relationship between retirement benefits and retention, suggesting that reenlistment rates have increased as retirement benefits have decreased. The author suggested that one potential reason for this unexpected relationship is the implementation of stop loss during the Gulf War, which prevented Soldiers from leaving the service at their scheduled ETS date.

Studies have also examined the impact of improvements to the Army's current retirement system through the potential provision of a deferred payroll savings plan, like a 401K. For instance, establishment of a Uniformed Services Thrift Savings Plan, modeled after the Thrift Savings Plan offered to federal civilian employees, resulted in positive effects on predicted retention determined by economic analysis (Pleeter, 1997). Moreover, RAND Corporation's 1997 Enlisted Career Intentions Survey, administered to members of the Army, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Navy, indicated that 70 percent of respondents felt that opportunities to build up savings would positively influence decisions to reenlist (Gilbert, 1999).

The sole effects of Army pay on retention have been analyzed in a sample of Reservists. For instance, Lakhani and Fugita (1993) conducted a series of hierarchical regression analyses and found that Reserve pay significantly affected retention intentions for Officers ($\beta = .147, p < .001$) and for enlisted personnel ($\beta = .159, p < .001$), suggesting that an increase in pay can increase the retention of Reservists. Similarly, Burnam, Meredith, Sherbourne, Valdez, and Vernez (1992) found that the adequacy of income was positively correlated with expected years of service for Soldiers at various installations within and outside the continental United States. It is estimated that for each one percent increase in military versus civilian pay, first-term retention increases by one to 1.5 percent (Buddin, Levy, Hanley, & Waldman, 1992).

Although the majority of research has focused specifically on pay and retirement benefits, other nonpecuniary factors within the Army have also been examined, such as healthcare and housing services. Based on a review by the Army Science Board Ad Hoc Panel on the Army Community and Their Families, Glacel, Brogan, Chapman, Daniels, and Edens (1989) found that Soldiers and their families were generally dissatisfied with the medical care and facilities offered by the military's Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services (CHAMPUS). Military medical facilities were cited as understaffed and overworked, making it difficult to schedule appointments and be seen by healthcare professionals. Additionally, based on data collected by the Army Families and Soldier Readiness survey (Burnam et al., 1992; August, 1996), researchers examined the impact of quality of life programs on subsequent career intentions and found that neither health services nor Army housing significantly impacted Soldiers' decisions to make the Army a career.

Overall, research has examined the effects that the Army's current pay and benefits system has on retention, in addition to the potential impact of proposed improvements to the Army's pay and benefit programs. Results imply that reenlistment intentions can be influenced by the Army's pay, retirement, and medical care systems, but a comprehensive evaluation of Army compensation in terms of the entire pay and benefits package provided to Soldiers and their families is warranted to identify the overall impact on retention. Moreover, additional research measuring actual retention behaviors instead of attitudinal or predicted retention outcome variables is needed.

Career Development

In an effort to increase reenlistment rates of first-term enlisted Soldiers, the Army implemented a career planning seminar intervention designed to increase the career maturity attitudes and self-esteem of program participants (Hawks, 1981). Results revealed positive relationships for both career maturity attitudes and self-esteem with reenlistment rates among program participants. However, there were no significant differences in reenlistment rates between program participants and the control group that did not receive training, suggesting the impact of the career planning seminar intervention on reenlistment decisions was negligible.

Recreational/Leisure Activities

Although very little research has evaluated the impact of recreational and leisure activities on career continuance, there is some support for their usefulness. In a review of findings by the Army Science Board Ad Hoc Panel on the Army Community and Their Families (henceforth referred to as the Family Panel), Glacel et al. (1989) reported that activities sponsored by the Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) department had a positive impact on Soldiers' attitudes, particularly among single Soldiers. Specifically, athletic facilities, auto and craft shops, bowling alleys, and enlisted clubs were most often cited as affecting single Soldier morale. Given that Soldier morale is likely to impact reenlistment decisions, these results support the notion that recreational activities may positively influence retention.

August (1996) also examined the relationship between use of various MWR programs and Soldiers' intentions to make the Army a career. Soldiers were asked about their use of such Army facilities as bowling alleys, indoor/ outdoor athletics, clubs, libraries, arts and crafts, recreation centers, music and/ or theaters, and auto crafts. For the majority of MWR programs, use was not related to intentions to make the Army a career. However, Army career intentions were positively related to use of Army recreation centers and Army libraries.

Relocation Services

Researchers have evaluated the effectiveness of several relocation services, as described in this section. For example, the Family Panel examined how retention is impacted by the Relocation Assistance Program (RAP), the Army's Sponsorship Program, and related ACS initiatives (Glacel et al., 1989). Regarding the RAP, Glacel et al. (1989) reported finding no formal evaluations in the literature; however, the Family Panel's investigation revealed that the RAP helped reduce family stress. Additionally, Burnam et al. (1992) quantitatively linked positive feelings about relocation assistance to emotional well-being and reduced depression among Soldiers and spouses. However, problems that may preclude the RAP's effectiveness include lack of awareness of the program and

difficulties with disseminating the information/ materials, particularly at OCONUS sites (Glacel et al., 1989).

For the Army's Sponsorship Program, mixed results have been reported. Hunter (1987) asked Army-affiliated personnel whether they thought the Army's Sponsorship Program positively impacted retention; 73% responded "definitely," less than 10% responded "no," and 17% were undecided. Despite these optimistic perceptions, the Family Panel described the program as having a "very uneven effectiveness record" (Glacel et al., 1989, p. 20). They found the program to be least effective for lower-ranking enlisted personnel, who could arguably benefit most from the program. Specific problems with the Sponsorship Program included a lack of command emphasis, lack of training and incentives for sponsors, and communication breakdowns between command levels. Moreover, an underlying assumption of the program is that assignments are known in advance and will not change; Glacel et al. (1989) argued that until the Army can increase predictability in this regard, the Army Sponsorship Program will remain ineffective.

Finally, the Family Panel also examined such ACS programs as household item loan closet, outreach efforts, and emergency food lockers. Their findings indicated that Soldiers needed/ used all these programs, which helped alleviate relocation stress and integrate young enlisted families into the community. This, in turn, had a positive impact on retention (Glacel et al., 1989).

Mentoring

Prevesto (1998) investigated the impact of informal mentoring on the professional socialization, job satisfaction, and intent to stay of company grade U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) nurses. Nurses were questioned regarding whether they had ever been involved in a mentoring relationship while in their current position, with 72 of the 171 nurses responding affirmatively. Results indicate that those nurses who had participated in a mentoring relationship were more satisfied with their current positions and reported a higher intent to stay in the U.S. Army Reserve, compared to non-mentored nurses. Although this study demonstrates the potential benefits of mentoring, the extent to which these results can be applied to first-term enlisted Soldiers is unknown.

Counseling

Surprisingly little research has evaluated the impact of Army counseling and support services even though several counseling programs exist across installations. The one study that we did find revealed that the use of counseling services for personal problems was negatively related to Army career intentions, suggesting that the more individuals used counseling services, the less likely they were to make the Army a career (August, 1996). Although the relationship was negative, the author reasoned that the counseling services serve as a method

for screening out the Soldiers not wanted by the Army, since these individuals tend to experience more emotional or substance abuse problems.

Financial Services

Although financial assistance is offered through various programs, such as the Army Emergency Relief (AER) fund and Army Community Services (ACS), limited research has examined its effectiveness. An exception is provided by August (1996), who investigated the impact of financial assistance from ACS programs, the Army Chaplain, the AER fund, and the Red Cross. While the study found no significant relationships between use of these programs or services and Army career intention decisions, the author points out several study limitations. First, the study utilized cross-sectional data, precluding any causal conclusions. Second, the study did not assess or control for MOS, which has been linked previously to retention. Lastly, the study was based on archival data collected in 1987, which may not reflect the characteristics of today's Army.

Spouse Services

The Family Panel investigated the effectiveness of two services targeting spouses: Spouse Employment Programs and Family Support Groups (FSG). Glacel et al. (1989) reported that spouse employment programs were effectively meeting spouses' needs at the time of their study. However, their assessment of the program was not entirely positive. Their findings indicated that the program did not adequately target certain groups. Young, unskilled, new Army spouses, as well as those stationed OCONUS, may have the greatest employment needs; however, the spouse employment programs were not focused on these groups. Thus, the effectiveness of these programs may have been less than optimal.

The impact of Family Support Groups seemed to vary across commands, with successful FSGs sharing some common characteristics (Glacel et al., 1989). The Family Panel found that FSGs tended to be more successful when they had more command support, were truly voluntary, had a democratic (versus rank-related) structure, and focused on mutual support and providing feedback. Similarly, a research report by the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR) indicated that spouses were more likely to form a supportive network, cope well, and have positive attitudes toward the units when commanders offered complete, open information to families; conducted comprehensive pre-deployment briefings; and provided administrative and logistical support to FSGs. Glacel et al. (1989) concluded that FSGs indirectly related to retention by improving the quality of life of spouses. Despite the potentially positive impact of FSGs, less than twenty percent of surveyed Army spouses reported receiving an invitation to participate in a family support group, and fewer than one-third were invited to a pre-deployment briefing (Burnam et al., 1992). Among those invited to attend, about half chose not to participate. These findings have implications for the effectiveness of spouse-related initiatives. If spouses are

unaware of the programs available to them or are unwilling to participate, then the initiatives are clearly not fulfilling their intended purposes.

Youth Services

Several researchers have examined how youth services, such as Army-sponsored child care and youth activities, impact retention and related outcomes. Eighty percent of Army survey respondents indicated that the Family Child Care Program had a positive impact on retention, nine percent of respondents were undecided, and less than one percent thought that it did not (Hunter, 1987). Another relevant study surveyed Army wives regarding their satisfaction with the cost of child care (Lakhani & Hoover, 1995). They found that a wife's dissatisfaction with the cost of child care negatively impacted her satisfaction with Army life. This, in turn, affected her desire for her husband to reenlist. Thus, Lakhani and Hoover (1995) highlight the indirect effect of child care costs on reenlistment decisions. With regard to quality of care, Glacel et al. (1989) found that Army-sponsored child care was perceived as having adequate quality; moreover, providing quality child care with flexible hours was viewed as having a positive impact on retention. However, the Family Panel reported the following problems with Army child care facilities: insufficient quantity, inflexible hours, inconvenient locations, and high costs (Glacel et al., 1989). It is also important that among Soldiers who utilized some form of child care, only 21% took advantage of Army-sponsored care (Lakhani & Ardison, 1991). Additionally, compared to Officers, enlisted Soldiers were even less likely to use these services.

In terms of other programs targeting Soldiers' children, Glacel et al. (1989) reported that youth services played a role in children's satisfaction and functionality. They argued that a child's dissatisfaction and dysfunctions impact Soldiers' morale, which may then influence retention. Although their discussion of youth services was generally positive, they did note that there were too few youth education opportunities available at OCONUS posts.

Army Family Action Plan (AFAP)

As described previously, the Army Family Action Plan provides a forum for family members to voice concerns to the Department of the Army. Such comments, criticisms, and suggestions are then processed by the Army, and changes may be implemented. Glacel et al. (1989) commented that the AFAP has the potential to impact retention via satisfaction with Army life. However, they noted several problems with the program, revealed by findings from the Family Panel. Specifically, though ideas from local posts tended to reach Major Command Headquarters, resolutions were not fed back to the original source of the feedback. Thus, complainants were not made aware of whether and how their comments were addressed. Despite this concern, it is important to note that

Glacel et al.'s (1989) report is fairly dated, and the degree to which this problem still exists is unknown.

General Evaluation of Army Programs

While the evaluation articles summarized up to this point examined the effectiveness of Army programs separately, several articles examined the impact of Army initiatives overall and/ or in relation to each other. These articles are reviewed in this section.

A few researchers addressed the overall effectiveness of Army programs, or groups of Army programs, with regard to retention. For example, Sterling and Allen (1983) found that satisfaction with Army programs/ benefits was the most important predictor of Army career intentions in a random sample of enlisted personnel. Additionally, Hunter (1987) investigated the impact of ACS programs in general, finding that 55 percent of respondents reported that ACS positively affected retention. On the other hand, 25 percent of those surveyed did not think ACS impacted retention.

Another article examined the impact of a variety of Army programs in relation to each other, using findings from 43 reports (Schumm, Bell, & Tran, 1998). Twenty-seven of the 43 reports summarized results from four worldwide surveys, including the 1985 DoD family survey, the 1987 Annual Survey of Army Families, the 1987 RAND Corporation survey, and the 1989 Army Family Research Program survey. Although the DoD survey included service members from all four military services, the other three solely targeted Army-affiliated individuals. Additionally, both Soldiers and their spouses were represented across the four surveys. Programs evaluated in their review include those sponsored by Army Community Services and Morale, Welfare, and Recreation, as well as other community support programs.

To summarize the findings for each initiative, programs were classified according to frequency of use (high, low) and levels of satisfaction with services rendered (high, low). Programs categorized as high use, high satisfaction were generally those that attempted to serve all Soldiers and spouses, including recreation, grocery stores, libraries, chaplains, and ACS initiatives. Conversely, low use, high satisfaction services were only useful to a small segment of the Army population. Sample services included directories of community services, information and referral services, arts and crafts, music and theater, financial and emergency services, youth employment programs, singles recreational programs, child abuse services, and treatment and counseling programs. Although many of these programs targeted a particular subset of the population, Schumm et al. (1998) noted that increased publicity might enhance utilization of these programs.

Although Soldiers and their spouses found many of the programs satisfactory, there were also several given unsatisfactory ratings. High use, low satisfaction

services included services for handicapped family members, quality of healthcare, child daycare, quality of on-post housing, certain education programs (e.g., special education and summer school), banking, the Post Exchange, and family support groups. Child daycare received among the highest levels of dissatisfaction of the discussed services, with only one-third of users reporting satisfaction. A common element of dissatisfaction among the high use, low satisfaction programs was a delay in the delivery of these services. Finally, relocation counseling, sponsorship for junior enlisted personnel, and spouse employment programs were classified as low use, low satisfaction programs. For example, only 36 percent of spouses looking for work reported using the spouse employment programs, and 66 percent of spouses rated the Family Member Employment Assistance Center as "fair" or "poor" (Vernez & Tharrington, 1989).

In addition to examining the use and satisfaction associated with each program, some researchers also investigated potential links between program use, satisfaction, and retention. For example, retention was related to satisfaction with housing, health care, the commissary, and spouse employment (Schumm et al., 1998). Further, individuals who used targeted programs (i.e., services targeting a particular subset of the population, such as childcare services) report an increased probability of reenlisting compared to those who did not use such programs (Devine, Bullman, & Gaston, 1992). Additionally, some researchers have focused on other criterion variables, finding that Soldiers who use general services received significantly higher performance ratings and reported higher family adaptation (Devine et al., 1992). Although the Schumm et al. (1988) article is fairly dated, reviewing survey data from 1985 to 1989, the breadth of their review is useful to our investigation.

Utilization of Reenlistment Initiatives

Although somewhat tangential to our focus here, several articles reviewed factors related to use of reenlistment initiatives. Such information can inform the Army as to who is taking advantage of the initiatives, which has implications for their effectiveness. Specifically, if Soldiers, or certain groups of Soldiers, are not utilizing Army benefits, then these programs are unlikely to impact reenlistment decisions. Thus, a brief review of research examining benefit use is summarized in this section.

According to Schumm et al.'s (1988) study, spouses were more likely than Soldiers to use Army services, and Officers tended to utilize services more than enlisted Soldiers. An exception to this is that enlisted Soldiers were much more likely to use emergency and financial services as compared to Officers (Schumm et al., 1988). Additionally, Burnam et al. (1992) found that military personnel with accompanying family members were more likely to use support services than unaccompanied personnel. Single parents were also more likely to use these services, compared to two-parent families with children. Another important finding regarded use of counseling and mental health services: Burnam et al. (1992) found that most Soldiers who reported symptoms of emotional problems

did not seek professional help, and those most in need of counseling initiatives were the least likely to utilize them. A thorough summary of individual, family, and environmental characteristics relating to use of specific services is provided in Burnam et al. (1992).

Information Gathered from Army Installation Interviews and Focus Groups (FY06 and FY07)

While research studies offer insight into whether retention initiatives are having their intended effects, it is also valuable to gather narrative accounts from Soldiers regarding their attitudes toward, and awareness of, the various programs and interventions. Some of this information can be gleaned from the interviews and focus groups conducted on Army installations worldwide in FY06 and FY07 (Lentz, Dorio, Klein, Tolentino, Kubisiak, & Horgen, 2006; Bryant, Lentz, Kubisiak, Horgen, Dorio, Tolentino & Young, 2009). A brief summary of the major findings is presented here.

A consistent finding across the posts and units we surveyed is that reenlistment bonuses, particularly Deployed SRBs, are a major incentive driving reenlistment decisions. In addition, the most popular reenlistment options involve re-classing to a different MOS and/ or selecting a Station of Choice. Army benefits, such as medical care, and academic incentives were also frequently mentioned as influential in the reenlistment decision. However, Soldiers described their frustrations with both of these initiatives, commenting that they are not always implemented successfully. For example, the Army medical system, TRICARE, was described as being of poor quality and requiring long wait times to see a medical professional. Additionally, enlisted Soldiers often stated that, while the academic opportunities are perceived as a desirable incentive, Soldiers frequently do not have time to take advantage of this benefit due to the frequency of deployments and long work hours in garrison.

Another theme that emerged from the interviews and focus groups is that Family Readiness Groups do not always provide their intended benefits. Although they are meant to provide deployment information, training, moral support, and social outlets for family members, they are sometimes viewed as doing more harm than good. FRGs were sometimes described as a breeding ground for gossip and a source of misinformation. In addition, Soldiers commented that FRG meetings should not be mandatory, given that they take away valuable time from Soldiers and their families.

While our review uncovered a wide variety of Army programs available to Soldiers, the extent to which Soldiers are fully informed about these incentives is unclear. Soldiers often mentioned a lack of awareness regarding Army programs, and they perceived this to be a result of communication breakdowns in the unit. For example, in several of the focus groups, a particular incentive (e.g., the BEAR program, BOSS events, etc.) was raised as part of the discussion, and a few participants commented that they had not heard of that incentive before. In

addition, the vast majority of Army programs were not mentioned in the interviews and focus groups, though Soldiers were asked to provide information on reenlistment initiatives available to them. This may reflect lack of awareness of the programs, non use, or simply an omission on the part of the participating Soldiers. Whether lack of awareness is problematic for certain benefits is not clear.

Though several common themes became apparent across many of the focus groups and interviews, differences emerged as well. Specifically, the impact of the various interventions appeared to vary depending on the Soldier's age, contract term, and family situation. For example, medical benefits and Current Station Stabilization tended to be more important for married Soldiers, while travel opportunities were frequently mentioned as desirable by single Soldiers. Thus, consideration of individual differences in needs and preferences when evaluating the effectiveness of reenlistment initiatives is important.

Summary of Evaluation Findings

According to our literature review, a limited amount of research has evaluated the impact of Army initiatives on reenlistment decisions and related attitudes. The majority of initiatives discussed in this paper have not been formally evaluated, and the evaluations that do exist need updating. Many Army programs have been modified in the past few decades, and the Army itself has undergone substantial changes. Thus, previous research may not generalize to the current Army. The existing literature is also limited in that program use was rarely quantitatively linked to reenlistment intentions and decisions. Instead, the research tended to focus on anecdotal support for program effectiveness or criterion variables peripheral to reenlistment. Several studies also examined demographic, environmental, and family background factors related to program use. While this information adds to our knowledge about Army initiatives, more research is necessary. Specifically, the Army would benefit from more recent research assessing whether relationships exist between use of specific Army programs or incentives and reenlistment intentions/ decisions.

The information gathered from the Soldier interview and focus group sessions often mirrored the findings from the research articles. Both provided support for the positive role that reenlistment bonuses play in reenlistment decisions. In addition, both highlighted the need to examine program quality, as well as the extent to which the programs are being implemented as intended, when considering their impact on quality of life and retention. Finally, both researchers (e.g., Burnam et al., 1992; Schumm et al., 1988) and Soldiers raised concerns about a lack of awareness of Army programs. Thus, more research examining the extent to which Soldiers are informed about the available initiatives would be fruitful.

Summary of Reenlistment Initiatives and Conclusion

As the review above indicates, the U.S. Army, like other military service branches have invested substantial resources into the retention of enlisted Soldiers. Given the expanding mission of the Army, and the challenges it confronts at the time of writing of this report, there is a clear need for interventions to address career continuance decisions.

As noted in our introduction, reenlistment is best viewed as an evolving process that occurs over the career of a Soldier. Thus, the Army appropriately takes a number of steps to address retention, focusing on Soldiers from the first day they enter the Army, and continuing throughout their careers. Further, the Army must take into account additional influences on Soldiers' lives, such as their families, in trying to influence career continuance decisions. These efforts take on an even greater importance at a time when the Army is faced with the challenges of high OPTEMPO.

A variety of methods were utilized to gather information on retention-related initiatives. We began by conducting a literature search for journal articles, technical reports, briefings, and Army-related websites addressing interventions that support reenlistment. Additionally, interviews and focus groups with Army personnel were conducted to identify unit-specific initiatives and potential gaps in the information obtained from the literature review. Subject Matter Experts were also contacted to supplement existing information. Finally, for comparative purposes, a limited literature search was conducted to acquire information on interventions implemented in other military branches.

The Reenlistment Process

Early in the report, we described basics of the reenlistment parameters. Specifically at 24 (or 18) months prior to a Soldier's expiration term of service (ETS), the reenlistment window opens and eligible Soldiers can submit applications for a variety of reenlistment options. Currently these include: Option 1, Regular Army (Needs of the Army); Current Station Stabilization (Option 2); Army Training (Option 3); Overseas Assignment (Option 4); and CONUS Station of Choice (Option 5).

The report next discussed the role of career counselors and reenlistment NCOs in relation to the reenlistment process. Career counselors conduct reenlistment interviews with Soldiers periodically throughout their contract terms. During the

interviews career counselors advise on educational and professional development opportunities and encourage Soldiers to reenlist. Twenty-four months before ETS, career counselors begin to work with reenlistment NCOs to specify for Soldiers their available reenlistment options and, to the extent possible, attempt to meet Soldiers' reenlistment preferences.

Reenlistment Initiatives

The next section of the report went into considerable detail describing the wide array of initiatives and programs intended to encourage retention and reenlistment and to address Soldiers' and their Family's well being. Information about these initiatives was generated from our literature review and interviews with Soldiers and SMEs. To organize the large number of initiatives, we developed a framework that had four broad categories: 1) reenlistment incentives; 2) work-related initiatives; 3) non work-related initiatives; and 4) group-level initiatives. These categories were in turn divided into a total of 17 sub-categories or dimensions. To summarize these dimensions, we described a sampling of them to demonstrate the breadth of these initiatives and programs.

Reenlistment Incentives

The dimensions in this category were 1) reenlistment options; 2) communication of reenlistment benefits; and 3) other reenlistment incentives. The reenlistment options were listed in the reenlistment process section earlier in the summary. Briefly, the current options are structured so that the two year reenlistment provides no specific advantages to the Soldier with respect to guarantees of assignment, training, or stabilization, whereas the other options provide these guarantees but require a three or four year commitment regarding reenlistment. Thus, with a two year commitment the Soldier is assigned to an MOS and location solely according to the needs of the Army. For a four year commitment, with some restrictions, Soldiers can receive training of choice or an overseas assignment they choose. A three year commitment can guarantee a CONUS station assignment the Soldier selects.

Reenlistment bonuses were also reviewed. The main idea is to encourage reenlistment, but another thrust is to populate undermanned MOSs. For example, the Bonus, Extension, and Retraining (BEAR) Program re-trains Soldiers for undermanned MOSs and provides a bonus payment in exchange for their reenlistment.

Work-Related Initiatives

The dimensions in this category were: 1) academic initiatives; 2) career development and promotional opportunities; 3) stabilization initiatives; and 4) benefits. We began by referring to the Army Continuing Education System

(ACES). ACES offers a variety of programs designed to assist Soldiers in achieving their educational goals. By providing the resources and means to attend academic courses, Soldiers are often able to obtain degrees that would otherwise be unavailable to them. Moreover, GoArmyEd offers a virtual gateway to assist Soldiers in utilizing ACES programs. Using GoArmyEd, Soldiers can request tuition assistance, access eArmyU, and examine the various degree programs available from accredited colleges and universities.

Thus, Soldiers can receive tuition assistance to attend school during non-duty hours on their way to an associate, bachelors, or even masters degree. They can attend classes at accredited schools, take courses online through eArmyU, or attend classes on post at most installations when a satellite campus is available.

The Army also helps Soldiers achieve their career objectives through a variety of career and professional development programs such as Leadership Skills Enhancement Courses, Special MOS Alignment Promotion Programs, and the Green to Gold Program. Another possibility for Soldiers who wish to earn a commission and be an Army officer is to apply to Army Officer Candidate School (OCS).

A very different opportunity for Soldiers is to apply for a stabilization guarantee. This incentive guarantees they can stay at the same installation, remain with the same unit, or remain in their current MOS for a specified period of time.

Finally, non-pecuniary benefits, such as healthcare, insurance, vacation time, and cost-of-living allowances often influence reenlistment decisions, especially for Soldiers with dependents.

Non Work-Related Initiatives

The eight dimensions in this category were: 1) recreational/ leisure activities; 2) relocation services; 3) deployment services; 4) counseling/ support; 5) financial services; 6) spouse services; 7) child services; and 8) general information. This section reviewed the many services and programs the Army has in place to support Soldiers and their families. These vary from recreational activities often provided by the Army Morale, Welfare, and Recreation organization to services helpful in every Soldier's career (relocation and deployment services) to support important in critical areas of some Soldiers' lives (counseling and financial services) and support provided to Soldiers' families (spouse and child services).

A few notable examples include the Relocation Readiness Program that provides counseling, guidance, and planning services to ease the transition from one installation to another, Soldier and Family Life consultants, providing confidential support in such areas as family matters, relationships, raising children, and substance abuse, Army Emergency Relief, assisting Soldiers and their dependents in dealing with financial crises, and the Employment Readiness Program which assists spouses in getting jobs, especially after a relocation.

In addition, several other sources such as Army Knowledge Online (AKO), Army One Source, and the Well-Being Liaison Office offer a variety of tools, resources, and services to sustain and enhance the quality of life of Soldiers and their families.

Group Level Initiatives

The dimensions associated with this category were: 1) awards; and 2) other group level initiatives. One example of a group-level award is the Army Communities of Excellence Award given annually to top installations demonstrating continuous business process improvement. Another example in this category is the Command Climate Survey, providing a way for Soldiers to provide anonymous feedback to their unit leadership.

Evaluation of Army Initiatives

In general, although there have been many initiatives, programs, and interventions focused on increasing retention in the Army, evaluations of effectiveness of these approaches has largely been lacking. However, we reviewed the available program evaluation research in several categories and were able to reach some conclusions. These include: 1) reenlistment bonuses impact positively on retention; 2) educational initiatives, especially tuition assistance programs, are effective for improving attitudes toward reenlistment as well as reenlistment behavior; 3) Army pay and retirement benefits have a positive influence on retention intentions; 4) Army career intentions were positively related to use of specific, Army-provided recreation facilities; 5) relocation services had mixed findings with respect to enhancing attitudes about retention; and 6) results regarding the impact of counseling, financial, spouse, and youth services on these attitudes were also mixed.

Our Army installation interviews and focus groups provided at least anecdotal accounts regarding attitudes toward some of the retention initiatives. For example, a consistent finding was that reenlistment bonuses provide a major reenlistment incentive. Regarding reenlistment options, the most popular seemed to be re-classing to a new MOS and being able to select a station of choice. Another result that became evident was that the impact of a given incentive or initiative tended to vary by Soldier age, contract term, and family situation. Thus, consideration of individual differences in needs and preferences when evaluating the effectiveness of reenlistment initiatives is important.

Overall, regarding evaluation of the reenlistment initiatives, more up-to-date research needs to be conducted for many of the programs and other initiatives. More studies that directly link program use to reenlistment behaviors rather than to attitudes about the programs or other less central behavior are also needed.

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